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BOOK BY BOOK

BOOK BY BOOK

Popular Studies on the Canon of Scripture

OLD TESTAMENT

BY

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Worcester
The Very Rev. Dean Spence, D.D. *Prof. James Robertson, D.D.*
Prof. A. B. Davidson, D.D., LL.D. *Late Professor W. G. Elmslie, D.D.*
Prof. Stanley Leathes, D.D.

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PREFACE.

THESE studies by eminent divines originally appeared as Introductions to the various Books of Holy Scripture in "The New Illustrated Bible," published by Messrs. H. Virtue and Company, Limited. In 1892 they were issued under the title "Book by Book," and thus presented in a single volume a complete and scholarly survey of the questions affecting the Sacred Canon which have of recent years caused so much discussion.

In compliance with frequently expressed wishes it has now been decided to publish the work in two volumes. The present volume is devotod to the Books of the Old Testament.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH.

1. *Name and Divisions.*—The books of the Old Testament which relate the history of Israel had originally no titles. A continuous stream of narrative runs on from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Second Book of Kings; and the names by which the various parts of this narrative were designated are of later date than the time of composition, and were given on various grounds, as will be explained in the chapters on the respective books.

From very ancient times the first five books of the series were treated as one whole; and in the Synagogue Manuscripts, which give us a better idea of the early appearance of the Old Testament Scriptures than our printed Hebrew Bibles, they form one roll, divided not into books but into sections. The name given by the Jews to this collection is *Torah*, meaning *teaching* or *law;* more fully, the *Book of the Law*, or the *Law of Moses*. To indicate the five-fold division, they also called the whole the *Five fifths of the Law;* and the early Christian Fathers, who received it in this form from the Jews, bestowed on it the name by which we now generally denote it, the *Pentateuch*, or *five-fold work*.

From the statement in Joshua xxiv. 26, that "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God," it may be inferred that some parts at least of that book were originally joined on to what preceded, and there are other features of the Book of Joshua that point to the same conclusion. Hence critics, in their investigations into the origin of the Old Testament books, are in the habit of speaking of the Hexateuch, or *six-fold work*. But the separate existence of the Pentateuch is very ancient, and the Samaritans, whose Pentateuch corresponds substantially with the Hebrew work, possess also a book of Joshua which

diverges very widely from the Hebrew book of that name. The five-fold division also is ancient, and seems to have given occasion to the division of the Psalter into five parts or books, as now represented in the Revised Version. The divisions are determined by the nature of the subject matter. Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses, a well-defined point in the history of Israel; in like manner Genesis ends with the death of Joseph; Exodus brings the narrative down to the time when the Tabernacle was set up; and, though Leviticus and Numbers are more closely connected, they are marked off by a formal pause in the narration.

2. *Constituent Elements—Main Purpose.*—A very slight examination of the Pentateuch, in the form in which it has come down to us, is sufficient to show that it contains two great elements, narrative and legislation. The latter is so prominent a feature that the Jews, particularly on account of the turn which their religious life took, give the name of law to the whole collection. Yet it is evident that the narrative is the uniting bond, and the narration of history the main purpose throughout the books. We see this (1) in the mode in which the connection is striven after and maintained, so that not only is there a steady advance in each individual book, but the progression is clearly marked from book to book. It is seen also (2) in the manner in which laws and institutions are linked on to signal events which are narrated. Thus the Sabbath law is connected with the record of the Creation (Gen. ii. 1—3); the prohibition of blood with the preservation of Noah's family at the Flood (Gen. ix. 1—7); circumcision with the covenant of promise to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 1—14); the Passover and the consecration of the first-born with the Exodus (Exod. xii.—xiii. 16).

In like manner the larger collections of laws and ordinances are set in an historical framework, as, for example, the collection beginning at Exod. xxv.; and as in Lev. x., and frequently in the Book of Numbers, an incident in the history gives occasion to some additional detail of legislation. The appearance of the laws in this fashion, in separate collections or in detail, in various places, while the narrative moves on in steady progression, gives the impression that the primary object in view throughout is not so much the exhibition of an elaborate code of laws as the delineation of a connected course of history.

And then (3) if we consider the nature of the laws themselves, we are led to the same conclusion. Many of them are given with reference to special situations, or suited only to temporary conditions; a greater number are in themselves of a formal or

ritual character, but the purpose for which they are given is always distinctly held up to view. Prior to the giving of the law is the choosing of the people; and the law is given to educate them for their high destiny. Such expressions as "I am the Lord," "Thou art an holy people," are ever recurring as reasons for the promulgation of a statute or motives for its observance; and underlying the enactments of the law there is the establishing of a covenant. When God promises Abraham a numerous seed and the possession of Canaan, He makes a covenant with him (Gen. xv. 18, xvii. 2); when He reveals Himself to Moses in the bush, there is a new declaration of the same covenant (Exod. vi. 4); and the great transaction at Horeb is spoken of also as a covenant (Deut. v. 2; compare Jerem. xxxi. 31).

The whole legislation of the Pentateuch points back to the choosing of a people for a special purpose, and points forward to the unfolding of that purpose in their history.

3. *Plan.*—Thus the two streams of narrative and legislation come together, and the current tends onward, mainly in chronological order, to one great end. The Book of Genesis is complete in itself, yet the reader at its close is aware that a great plan is being unfolded, and asks what is to follow; and at the close of Deuteronomy there is not only a distinct retrospect to all that preceded, but there is a great plan still in progress.

And what is the plan? It is to trace the rise, selection, and consolidation of a covenant people who have, in God's purpose, a great work to perform in the world. And in the unfolding of this plan, the narrative is not content with starting from the time when the people existed as a nation, but traces them backward to a chosen family, of which Abraham was the head. This family is again traced back to its source, and that again to a higher source, till the origin of the human race and of the universe is reached. Or, to change the point of view, there is from the beginning onwards a kind of pyramidal structure, each succeeding stage of which is narrower than the preceding. Thus, when "All flesh had corrupted its way on the earth," a new beginning is made in the family of Noah; in this family a limitation is made to the descendants of Shem; from among them the family of Abraham is selected, and the patriarch himself is made the depositary of the promise. Again, there is an elimination of Ishmael and the Keturæans, and the promise centres in Isaac; one son of Isaac is set aside, and the blessing runs in the line of Jacob and his descendants, among whom Ephraim and Judah are specially designated to future pre-eminence.

Along with this limitation in the extent of the chosen people, there is an increasing intensity in the nature of the charge assigned to them. The covenant with Abraham is much more special than the covenant with Noah, and the covenant at Sinai is ratified with still more specific commands. In all this there is a manifest unity of plan and a steady progress to a future. Great blanks in time do not interrupt the thread of the narrative, and from the very first there are hints of a greater consummation which, even at the close of the books, is still distant. The purpose is plainly not to collect facts in order to satisfy curiosity, but to select facts to prove a design. It is history, and particularly the religious history of a divinely guided people that is contemplated.

4. *Unity.*—The unity of the Pentateuch, however, lies rather in this uniting idea than in its external form; it is more historical than literary. Though there is a steady progression, events are not narrated in strictly chronological order; different accounts of one and the same event are found side by side; repetitions are not considered a literary blemish; nor is all that relates to one subject set down in one place.

As in other Scriptures, the work of human hands is apparent in the arranging and selecting of existing materials, and there is little or no effort made to conceal the fact that materials are made use of. Whereas a modern historian, after consulting his authorities and verifying his facts, relates occurrences in his own words, with a reference to the sources from which he has drawn, we have here the very words of the authorities; family registers, lists of places, fragments of old poetry, stories of bygone days, and details of the lives of ancient heroes, minute regulations of social life or ritual service, are all strung upon the one thread of the history, but their individuality is not obliterated.

As the books traverse a wide space of time, the materials thus put together belong to different periods. Side by side with accounts of primeval times, handed down orally or in writing, we have notices of a later time, explaining the names of places or elucidating matters that are obscure. Points that in a modern book would fall into foot notes are placed in the text; and there is no attempt to conceal the work of human hands in the composition. The work may be said to be as unique in its literary form as it is uniform in its historical conception.

5. *The Literary Problem.*—A production of such a description presents a literary problem of great difficulty, and no question has been more keenly discussed than that of the origin and

composition of the Pentateuch. The Jews indeed, from the earliest times at which we find them stating their tradition as to the origin of the various books of the Old Testament, without hesitation ascribe the Pentateuch to Moses, using the expression "Law of Moses," or "Book of the Law of Moses," convertibly with the "Five-fifths of the Law."

This belief was accepted without question by the early Christian Church on the authority of the Jewish synagogue, and so the Pentateuch has come to be commonly described as the Five Books of Moses. A tradition so persistent is not to be summarily set aside, for it may be concluded that it rests on some solid basis of fact, but neither is it to be accepted as decisive, because this is a matter of minute details in which tradition cannot be expected to be precisely accurate. The occurrence of a great event, or of a series of great events, or the activity of a great personage, may make such an impression on the memory and the life of a people that tradition cannot go astray in reference to it; but the handing on of a book or books through a series of generations, when the art of printing was unknown, and through a history full of remarkable vicissitudes, is a different matter.

Jewish tradition itself ascribes to Ezra an undefined but not inconsiderable share in the work of reducing the Pentateuch and other Scriptures to their present shape, and from the time of Moses to that of Ezra we have no definite information as to the process through which the earlier writings passed. But it is to be observed that it was not on the strength of their being written by this or that person that the ancient Jews accepted their sacred books. These books had come down to them from ancient times, many of them being anonymous compositions, though no doubt some tradition of authorship attached to each of them; but it seems to have been only when they were being collected or after they were collected into a canon, that each had its authorship assigned to it. The historical books from Judges onwards give no intimation of the hands by whom they were written, and the traditions of the Jewish synagogue, of a later time, are very uncertain.

It is particularly to be noticed that in the books of the Pentateuch itself the Mosaic origin is not claimed. In the Book of Genesis there is no mention of authorship whatever; and in the three succeeding books the few passages that might be taken as direct assertions that Moses wrote what has come down to us in the Pentateuch, will be found on examination to refer only to certain specific things, though of course they do not exclude

the writing of other things.* And the same is to be said of the similar statements in the Book of Deuteronomy xxxi. 9—11, 22, 24—26. What all these passages directly say is that Moses was commanded to write and did put down in writing certain matters, both of history and of legislation, "for a memorial;" and thus, indirectly, the Pentateuch itself leads us to the conclusion that he had to do with the two great streams of which we saw it is composed. So also the Book of Joshua makes distinct mention not only of a law, but of a book of the law, the writing of which is ascribed to Moses.† It is remarkable that neither in the Book of Judges nor in those of Samuel is there any direct mention of such a written work; but notices of it again appear in the Book of Kings, and are continued in the succeeding historical Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. These notices are either in general terms, such as those that have just been adduced, or consist of references to special laws and ordinances ascribed to Moses. They become more precise in the priestly Books of Chronicles; and in the time of Ezra, who was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given" (Ezra vii. 6), there is a detailed account (Nehemiah viii.) of the public reading, with ceremony, of a formal "Book of the Law of Moses," "from the morning till midday," in the audience of the people.

6. *Traditional View.*—We need not therefore wonder at the tenacity of the tradition which ascribes the Pentateuch to Moses. On the one hand, the work of the great leader had deeply impressed itself on the memory of the nation and moulded its history, as testified by succeeding events and by the constant appeal of the prophets. On the other hand, there were these distinct references to his work as a writer and legislator, warranting the impression that the legal system handed down from old time was derived from him. Nothing was more natural, when the sacred books were collected and accepted as a basis of faith and practice, than that the Pentateuch should be summarily accepted as of Mosaic authorship. If ever there was a time in the history of Israel when laws and ordinances were particularly needed to shape the nation's life, it was at such a time and in such a situation as the history assigns to Moses. The time of youthful hope, in nations as in individuals, is the time when plans are made for the future; at such a time and in such circumstances also, a nation would become conscious of the fact that it had a destiny and a history before it.

* The passages should be examined in their connection:—Exodus xvii. 14; xxiv. 4, 7; xxxiv. 27. Numbers xxxiii. 1—2.

† Josh. i. 7, 8; viii. 31, 34; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 26.

It is one thing to make history and another thing to write it (though in the discussions that have taken place as to the origin and transmission of these books, the distinction has not been sufficiently borne in mind); but we have seen enough to prove that Moses, standing at the commencement of the national life, thought of both things. Knowing that his people were born to a high destiny, he put down "for a memorial" the record of great events in which they were concerned, and committed to writing laws and ordinances for their future guidance. But as to the actual amount of his writing we are not informed. Things that were "rehearsed in the ears" of Joshua, things that were spoken to "Aaron and his sons," or to "the priests," may have been preserved orally by them, or committed afterwards to writing. The potent influence of Moses on the history and destinies of his nation is undoubted; but the precise amount of the matter contained in the Pentateuch that came directly from his hand is a legitimate subject of critical inquiry. Now the tradition of the Jews, accepted by the early Christian Church, was evidently based on the general belief as to the historical position of Moses, not on a minute examination of the writings ascribed to him. It belongs to a time when the work of literary criticism was unknown, and it did not take account of some considerations which must be borne in mind in seeking to arrive at an exact conclusion on such a subject.

7. *Modification of Traditional View.*—In the *first* place, we must bear in mind the long time that elapsed between Moses and Ezra, to whom the Jews attribute the restoration of the law. It was a time, not only long in extent, but filled up with the extraordinary vicissitudes of a most remarkable history, periods of declension and seasons of revival, war from without and schism from within, the deadening effects of prosperity and the sobering influences of captivity; and we are told nothing of the custody and fate of the sacred writings during this period, and only in very general terms are they mentioned at all. The history turns more upon the maintenance of the nation's religion than upon the preservation of its literature. The prophets had at times to contend earnestly for the very recognition of the true God and the practice of the most fundamental duties of religion; and though they ever appealed to the covenant relation of Israel, we do not wonder that they troubled themselves little with the enforcing of the mere external observances of the law, or even threw contempt upon these when they were divorced from heart-religion.

For long periods the people of Israel seem to have been as ignorant of their own religion as the people of Europe were of

theirs in the Dark Ages. The discovery of the law book in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings xxii.) is like the discovery by Luther of the New Testament in the monastery; and when at last Ezra reads the law to the returned exiles, it is as new to them as the Bible was to the people at the Reformation. But whose hands preserved the original writings during all this time? By what pens were they copied from generation to generation, and in what form were they handed down till they came into the possession of Ezra the Scribe?

These questions suggest a *second* point which we have to bear in mind in considering this matter, viz., the mode in which books were transmitted in ancient times. We know with what care the Jews have preserved and handed down their sacred books from the time that they were collected into a canon; but that time falls comparatively late, and, whatever may have been the cause, we have not, as in the case of the New Testament, manuscripts of the Old Testament reaching back to a period reasonably near the time at which the books were composed. The oldest known manuscripts of the Old Testament belong to the tenth century after Christ, and though versions of an older date show that the text was fixed centuries before, yet we have no means of knowing what aids were employed to secure the correctness of the text, or, indeed, on what principle the text was fixed. And when we look at the books themselves, and consider the mode in which other Eastern works have been handed down, there are some noteworthy features that strike us.

The anonymous character of all the historical writings of the Old Testament would lead us to conclude that the ancient Hebrews had not the idea of literary property which we attach to authorship. Joshua, as we have seen, wrote certain things in the Book of the Law; and whole passages are found repeated, with variations, in different parts of Scripture.* Even in two contemporaneous writers the same piece occurs, without any information as to whether the one borrowed from the other or both from a common source.† Whatever documents or sources were employed in the Pentateuch, they are simply appropriated, and only on rare occasions‡ is the quarter named from which they are taken. Besides this absence of marks of quotation, we have to note the absence of marginal or foot-notes, such as are common in modern works of history. Yet, unless

* Compare 2 Sam. xxii. with Psalm xviii., and 2 Kings xviii. 13—xx. 19, with Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix.

† Compare Isaiah ii. 1—4, with Micah iv. 1—3.

‡ As in Numbers xxi. 14.

the Hebrews were very different from other Orientals in this respect, they must have written on the margins of their manuscripts. In Eastern works that have been handed down in manuscript, it is the commonest thing to find marginal notes by a later hand by way of explanation or commentary, and not an uncommon thing to find, on the margin of one work, a complete treatise of another author on the same or a kindred subject.

Now a scribe copying a work with marginal notes, especially if it were a work in regard to which the question of literary property did not occur to him, might naturally transfer such notes into the text; or an editor, wishing to have a complete edition, might combine two or more longer pieces into one whole, adding to the fulness of the work, yet allowing the joinings of the original parts to be seen. Of course, when once the books were collected into a canon and the text fixed, this was no longer admissible; and the Jews have most carefully handed down the books of their canon, without venturing to change a word or a letter. But what happened to these anonymous works while they were in process of completion is not a matter of direct historical knowledge. It is a legitimate task for criticism to examine the books themselves, as other ancient books are examined, with a view to determine, if possible, by what process their materials were brought together and handed down.

8. *Composite Character of the Pentateuch.*—It is long since the composite character of the Pentateuch was observed. Even the earlier Jewish writers, who claimed Mosaic authorship for the whole, except the concluding verses of Deuteronomy, which record the death of Moses; and some of the more acute thinkers of a later time were struck by the occurrence of expressions, phrases, and passages which could hardly have come from his hand, but seemed rather to be later additions.* Several writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries drew attention to other features in the books pointing in the same direction, and advanced theories to account for them; but it was not till the middle of the eighteenth century that a line of investigation was started which determined the future course of systematic criticism.

* It is impossible, in an introduction like the present, to go into details, or even to refer to many of the phases which critical discussion on this subject has assumed. The reader who is conversant with the subject will observe that the aim is to lead on, as briefly as possible, to the present position of the discussion.

Astruc, a learned French physician, accepting Moses as the author of the Book of Genesis, set himself to discover and exhibit the documents that Moses had made use of in the writing of it. He pointed out that certain parts were distinguished by the employment of the name Elohim, rendered *God* in our English version, while other parts employed the name, usually written Jehovah in English, and rendered in our version *The* LORD. He supposed that these different names indicated different original documents, and that out of these two larger documents, and a certain number of smaller ones, Moses constructed the existing Book of Genesis, and the opening chapters of Exodus. On the line of enquiry thus started it has been the endeavour of modern criticism to determine the component elements of the Pentateuch and their relative dates.

9. *Literary Criticism.*—It was observed by the critics that this peculiarity in the use of the Divine names was not confined to Genesis, but extended to the other books. It was also noted that the portions using these different names had other characteristics distinguishing them from one another; moreover, that the Book of Deuteronomy had a style and tone different in important respects from both, and that all these literary features are found also in the Book of Joshua. The problem, therefore, was to account for this diversified character of composition, to determine the relations of the various component parts to one another, and to fix their respective dates.

In the course of an inquiry, prosecuted with the utmost labour and ingenuity, various theories were put forward, agreeing in certain main points, but exhibiting differences of detail as numerous as the writers who engaged in the discussion. The theory of fragments, advanced by some, according to which the Pentateuch was composed of isolated pieces, put together without any internal connection, was admitted to be inadequate to explain the manifest coherence of the whole. The hypothesis of two independent original works, the one Elohistic and the other Jehovistic, combined by a later hand, did not account for the fact that certain Elohistic parts adhered so firmly to the Jehovistic work that they could not be separated. And the theory that an original Elohistic work had been supplemented by a Jehovistic writer, left unexplained the fact that the supposed supplement appeared to be, so far, a document complete in itself.

The main points on which critics came to be agreed, about a quarter of a century ago, were:—that there was, first in order, an Elohistic document (in which were incorporated some elements of an ancient date), running through the Pentateuch and beyond

it; that there was also a document described as Jehovistic, although Elohistic matter adhered to it; and that there came, finally, the Deuteronomic portion, the work of a succeeding writer, who had combined the others, and, with the addition of his own material, constructed what we have now substantially in the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. As to the manner in which the various elements were brought together, and the times at which the composition and editing took place, scarcely any two writers of note agreed. Criticism almost lost itself in the multiplicity of its details; and Kuenen, one of the most prominent of the critical school, had at last to confess that "the books of Moses" themselves "did not furnish a sufficient number of fixed points, and left room for great difference of opinion" on this subject.

10. *Historical Criticism.*—Meanwhile another line of inquiry had been taken up. It was presumed that an examination of the historical books from Judges onwards would show to what extent the laws and ceremonies of the Pentateuch had been actually observed, and would consequently afford means for determining in what order the different parts of the legislation had come into force. The Deuteronomic legislation was taken as the starting-point; and it was concluded that, since the law prescribing a central sanctuary* was not enforced before the time of Josiah, the law itself could not have existed till that king's reign, and the substance of the book must have been written shortly before the reformation which he set on foot.† On the same line of reasoning, Graf set himself to examine the history with reference to the legislation contained in the Elohistic portion, which had hitherto been reputed the earliest part of the Pentateuch. The conclusion at which he arrived was, that the laws of that portion were not observed till after the Captivity, and that therefore they must have been introduced by Ezra and his successors. And then, when it was pointed out that these laws are closely incorporated with historical details which relate the early institution of the laws, Graf boldly declared that these historical portions were likewise of late date, and must have been written to give a colour of antiquity to the laws.

This theory, as compared with other theories which had preceded it, has not inappropriately been called a theory of crystallization. For it explains the composition of the Pentateuch and historical books by the supposition of a process of literary deposits belonging to different periods. That is to say, it pro-

* It is found in Deut. xii. 4 ff, and elsewhere.

† 2 Kings xxii., xxiii.

fesses to have discovered three different codes of legislation, separated by wide intervals of time, viz., the Book of the Covenant, contained in Exodus xx. 23—xxiii.; the Deuteronomic Code, introduced in the reign of Josiah; and the Levitical Code, embracing a great part of Exodus and the whole of Leviticus, and introduced after the Exile. And it arranges the historical materials of the books in a series of deposits, according as they show that one code or another was in existence at the time of their composition. The theory, it will be seen, is revolutionary in its critical aspects; for it places last in order of composition the document which had hitherto been considered to have all the marks of being the earliest. It is also revolutionary in the view it gives of the course of Israel's history; for it represents the nation as having existed with the smallest amount of written law, and with the very crudest and most elementary notions of religion up to the time of the prophets, who were the teachers of a purer faith, and through whose influence the two greater legislative codes were at subsequent times introduced. The order of succession, on this theory, is no longer "Moses and the Prophets," but the Prophets and Mosaism; and a large part of the narratives of the Pentateuch is legendary or fictitious, composed at a late time to support an unhistorical view that had come to prevail as to Israel's early history.

It is evident that the question of the handing down of books dwindles into insignificance in view of the issue that is now raised. The point now is, not as to the amount that Moses wrote, but as to the truth of the story which the Pentateuch tells of the time and activity of Moses; and we have, as opposed to the account which the Biblical writers give of the course of the history, an entirely different account, which is evolved by critical processes from the writings. As to the steps in the critical process by which the theory is reached, detailed discussion would here be out of place; and it will be more convenient to refer to them in treating of the several books. It may be merely said here that many points which are claimed to be proved are at least very questionable; and that the fluctuations of critical inquiry in the past, and the attitude of reserve maintained by some writers of undoubted critical ability at the present time, make it very probable that what claims to-day to be "the received view of European scholarship" may at no distant date be seen to be open to revision. We can only make a few observations on the theory as a whole.

11. *Objections to the Critical View.*—This theory of Israel's history, when presented in its fully developed form, is open to very serious objections from three different points of view.

In the first place, it is manifest that the principle of denying the existence of a law on the ground that, at a stated time, or for a certain period, there is no historical proof of its observance, is one that cannot safely be applied. The history of the Christian Church during the nineteen centuries in which the New Testament has been accepted as the authoritative rule of faith and life is a standing refutation of it; for have there not been doctrines and practices lying in abeyance, sometimes for centuries, in spite of the written word? On this principle it might be concluded that the second commandment was not known in Solomon's time, because there were "graven images" of bulls under the great brazen laver in the Temple court; and from the way in which Jeremiah speaks of the practices of cutting and making bald for the dead (Jer. xvi. 6), it might be inferred that the laws forbidding these things (Deut. xiv. 1, Lev. xix. 28) were unknown to him. The Law of the Covenant itself was systematically violated in its essential part, the prohibition of tampering with idolatry, down to the close of the nation's independence. It will be the proper place in the chapters on the succeeding books to speak of their alleged silence as to the Mosaic legislation, and the accounts they give of the antecedent history. It is sufficient here to observe that the historical books continually assume Israel's unfaithfulness to the law and the covenant, that the prophets had a higher function than to enforce the observance of ceremonial laws, and that all succeeding writers assume the truthfulness of the history of the Mosaic period.

In the second place, when the theory is applied in detail it is found to raise more difficulties, and difficulties of a more serious nature, than those which it professes to remove. (*a*) It puts a weight upon the age of Ezra and his successors which it will not bear. It is plain from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and from what we know of the succeeding time, that that age was not one of such productiveness as this theory demands. These men rested upon a past, and but for a general belief in the authority of an existing law they could not have induced the people to accept the reforms which they introduced. Moreover, (*b*), the Samaritans could not have received their Pentateuch later than the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; it is virtually the same book as the Hebrew one, and in view of their jealousy of the leaders at Jerusalem, their possession of it implies their belief in its existence and authoritative character at a much earlier time. Again, (*c*), this theory fails entirely to explain the activity of the prophets before the Exile. For it represents them as the virtual originators and founders of the monotheistic religion, and the

nation of their time as not only practising the religious rites of the heathen around them, but as actually knowing no better; whereas the whole tone of the prophetic teaching is one of reproof for unfaithfulness to the true God, and for breaches of a covenant which was the very basis of the nation's existence.* Finally, (*d*), the theory fails to account for the high esteem in which Moses is held from first to last in Scripture, and for the firm belief in the events which are associated with his name; in other words, it reduces the influence of Moses to such a degree that there is not sufficient material left on which to base the prevalent belief that he was the great lawgiver and leader of the nation.

In the third place, underneath this theory, as it has been held by its most prominent advocates, lies the assumption that religion is merely a matter of ethical development, an assumption which vitiates the whole process. Thus Wellhausen adopts as the motto of his inquiry the words used by St. Paul in reference to the heathen nations, "these having not the law, do by nature the works of the law," and summarily sets aside all that is miraculous in the narratives as unhistorical; and Kuenen opens his "Religion of Israel" with the declaration, "For us the Israelitish religion is one of the principal religions, nothing less, but also nothing more," and proceeds to treat the documents on the hypothesis that the religion of Israel grew up by natural development. This is a begging of the whole question. The whole point is to find out whether it is or is not "something more." These writers themselves accept the fact that the history of Israel is unique, and that it was their religion that made it so. The whole question is, Was there not something unique in the manner in which this religion was made known? But the presupposition with which these critics start requires them to identify the religion of any period with the belief and practice of the people for the time being; and their theory of historical development enables each individual to extract just as much or as little of historical fact from the documents before him as suits his own views. Wellhausen, for example, admits that the

* As an instance of the way in which a theory can be pushed at all hazards, it may be noted that Stade, in his "Geschichte des Volkes Israel" (1881—1888), admits that Hosea, one of the earliest of the writing prophets, represents the corrupt religion of his time as a declension; but instead of accepting the prophet's declaration as a statement of fact, he says in effect that Hosea was wrong on this matter, and that his misrepresentation prepared the way for the "unhistorical view" that came to be taken of the nation's history under the influence of later ideas!

Exodus from Egypt was an historical event, although it was effected in a natural manner; but Stade says boldly that it is in vain to look for traces of Israel's sojourn in Egypt because the people were never there. And when two writers, claiming to be guided by the same principles of criticism, draw conclusions so different from the same documents, it is plain that it is something apart from the documents that determines the result.

12. *Credibility.*—On the whole it may be said that the course of critical inquiry tends to confirm our confidence in the credibility and value of these early books. By investigating the process by which the books were brought together, it has, so to speak, summoned so many different witnesses in corroboration of the history. The different portions, so diverse in their tone, and belonging to different periods, fit together in a remarkable manner into a consistent history, showing development in the best sense of the word. Arranged in any order into which the ingenuity of criticism may cast them, they tell substantially the same tale. The only alternative, that large portions were invented at a later time to support a fiction, is an instance of criticism driven to desperation. That a writing is late is no reason to regard it as inaccurate. The very lateness of a writer may be the occasion of giving him a deeper insight; and the course of the succeeding history has proved that the insight of the Old Testament writers was correct.

The existence of the Jewish race at the present day is a fact which can only be explained by their history and their religion. The Christian religion itself is the witness to the unique character of the history of Israel. We do not require to press the New Testament references to the Law into proofs that the Pentateuch as it is came from the hand of Moses. But the whole history of Christianity proves that a religion may, at its rise, be far above the conceptions of the time, and that it may, for centuries, be far above the practice of those who profess it; and the New Testament rests so firmly on the Old, that there is the strongest presumption that what is true of the one, in this respect, is true of the other. We need not undervalue the truth that is found in the other "principal religions" of the world. The Bible itself acknowledges the existence of such truth in various ways. But the fact remains, that the One God designed from the first to give to mankind one religion which is above all others; and these early books show us the first stages of preparation for its manifestations.

There may remain doubts as to when the various parts of the Pentateuch were actually written down; it may be admitted that

later writers wrote in the light of the events and circumstances of their own times. But the substantial coherence and consistency of the whole indicate a guiding Hand and a Divine purpose revealing itself from stage to stage; and the manner in which the story is told indicates that there was a perception of such a plan and a consciousness of the purpose on the part of the men by whom the story was committed to writing. So that, in reading these records of early time, while we note "the sundry times and divers manners" in which it was made known, we become more and more convinced that a great plan of mercy underlies the whole, which is unfolded through Moses and all the prophets, and is at last fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

GENESIS.

1. *Name of the Book.*—The names given in the Hebrew Bible to the five books composing the Pentateuch consist merely of a word or words taken from the opening verse of each; and so this first book of the series is simply designated by the expression translated "In the beginning" . . . Jewish writers sometimes employ other names descriptive of the contents, calling the book before us the "Book of Creation;" and, on the same principle, the Hellenists and Church Fathers applied to it the name we now use, *Genesis, i.e. Origin or Genealogy.* The name is not inappropriate, in view of the commencement of the book and the recurring genealogies which are found in it; but it would be inadequate, if taken to imply that the chief aim of the book is to give an account of the origin of the world. In the opening chapters we have indeed an account of the Creation and of the early history of the human race; but this is but preparatory to the main part of the book, beginning at the eleventh chapter, viz. the history of the chosen family of Abraham, which at the close of the book is seen expanding into the chosen nation of Israel.

2. *Plan and Form.*—A definite plan is more observable in the Book of Genesis than in the other books of the Pentateuch. Starting with the origin of the world and of the human race, it tells of the entrance of sin (i.—iv.), the spread of mankind and the increase of evil leading to the infliction of Divine judgment in the Flood (v.—viii. 4.). A new commencement is made with righteous Noah and his family, and there is a new expansion and increase of evil, culminating in the judgment of Babel (viii. 15—xi. 9). The chosen succession is again limited to the line of Shem and the family of Terah (xi. 10—32), and at this point the patriarchal history commences, the remainder of the book being occupied with the fortunes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his family, who at the close are transplanted to the soil of Egypt, from which they are to come forth as a nation.

In all this we perceive at once the narrowing of the lines of God's choice and the intensifying of the purpose for which the choice is made.* We perceive, also, what may be called the philosophy of history which runs through the Old Testament: a holy seed grows, becomes corrupted, and suffers punishment, but a remnant, purified by chastisement, is saved, again expands and runs through the same cycle.

Very observable, in the matter of literary form, is the arrangement of the history in a series of genealogies. The expression, "These are the generations," occurs ten (or, strictly speaking, eleven) times, showing a steady progression of the narrative. Thus we have "the generations of"—

The heavens and the earth (ii. 4).	Terah (xi. 27).
Adam (v. 1).	Ishmael (xxv. 12).
Noah (vi. 9).	Isaac (xxv. 19).
Sons of Noah (x. 1).	Esau (xxxvi. 1, 9).
Shem (xi. 10).	Jacob (xxxvii. 2).

Among other literary characteristics of the composition that have been pointed out may be mentioned the two accounts of the Creation (i. 1—ii. 3 and ii. 4—25), and two of the Flood (vi. 5—ix. 17), distinguished by the names of "God" and "the LORD" respectively, in the latter case the two accounts being fused into one. The notes in regard to the "Canaanite" (xii. 6) and "the kings that reigned in Edom" (xxxvi. 31) were also long ago pointed out as indications of the work of a late hand in the composition; and the position of the account of the family of Keturah (xxv.) may be taken as an instance of the writer's indifference to strict chronological order.†

3. *Scope.*—The Book of Genesis, regarded by itself, might be described as the account given by the Hebrews of their own origin and of the origin of the world. To the questions, Whence are we? and Whence came this world? all literary nations have, in their infancy, applied themselves, and given very various answers. They are the questions which children put to their parents in all ages, and this book contains the answers which we may suppose the fathers in Israel gave to their children when they asked the meaning of various religious observances, or clustered round their knees and gazed inquiringly up to heaven, while the moon walked in brightness and stars looked down from the cloudless sky. They would be told how their forefather Abraham left his home in distant Ur of the Chaldees, and journeyed westward in obedience to a heavenly call: that the

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 3, p. 3.
† *Ibid.*, §§ 4, 8, pp. 4, 9.

God who called him was the Creator of all things, who had made all things good, and man for a holy purpose: how men, in their forgetfulness of God, had fallen into the worship of sun, moon, stars, and other created things, but that God had never ceased to guide them and make Himself known to them: and how Abraham had been finally severed from the idolatrous race, and made the father of a family which was to be the depositary of God's truth, the means of keeping alive His memorial in the world.

Such was the faith, such were the traditions, going back to earliest times, which must have prevailed, if not among the mass of the people, at all events among the thinking and pious of the nation, before the materials which compose the Book of Genesis took shape. Such a faith was needed to give the nation solidity and unity; without such a faith it could not have assumed the form it took nor held the position it maintained, in the midst of nations and peoples vastly more powerful in numbers and superior in the arts and appliances of life.

4. *Religious Tone.*—And we cannot fail to be struck, first of all, with the high religious tone of these early traditions of the Hebrews, as compared with the accounts which other nations of antiquity have given of themselves and of the world. The first verse strikes the keynote of the whole. By the few simple words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the "gods many" of the heathen mythologies are swept away, the extravagant ancient cosmogonies are brushed aside; the deification of material things, the degradation of the Godhead, and the fabulous divine origin of mankind—everything, in short, that distinguishes the pagan systems—is contradicted, and the world and the human race are set in a new and brighter light. Even when there is an approach to the mythological language of paganism (as in vi. 2), there is no approach to its gross materialistic conceptions. The very name of God, *Elohim*, is plural in form, but it is regularly employed as a singular, and suggests no polytheistic meaning; and though the LORD, *Jehovah*, is represented as smelling with satisfaction the savour of Noah's sacrifice (viii. 21), and coming down to earth to interfere in man's affairs (xi. 7), yet there is not the faintest trace of the ascription to Him of the caprices and passions which the heathen attributed to their gods.

And this is the characteristic of the Hebrew writers throughout the Old Testament, that, though their language is steeped in poetic feeling and abounds in the boldest personifications, they are never betrayed by it into the deification of created things, or the endowment of them with conscious life. Sun, moon, and

stars, which others worshipped and regarded as sentient existences, are merely the work of God's fingers. Hebrew poets may represent the morning stars as singing together, floods lifting up their voices, and fields clapping their hands, but they are stars, floods and fields still, and all their manifestations are to the praise of God. In the wide universe everything is from God and subject to Him; of all earthly creatures, man alone is made in the Divine image, and man's world is still under the direct government of God.

We may find, in the later history of Israel, this faith overlaid with many corruptions, and held in conjunction with very inconsistent practices (and what nation has not exhibited similar perversions of its own religion?), but it is there as a light shining in a dark place, and giving to the world a witness to the true God. The whole subsequent history of Israel is based on the supposition that God made Himself known to Abraham, and that the patriarch handed on to his descendants a purer tradition of primitive times than the traditions of other historic peoples. This tradition the Book of Genesis has preserved for us; and in whatever mode we may suppose that the materials of the book were brought together, or in whatever way we may conclude that they were preserved before they assumed their present form, it is round this faith, as round a magnet, that they have been attracted and have grouped themselves: that God, the Maker of all, has had a purpose from the beginning, and that, amid all the strivings of mankind, and the idolatries of the nations, the Divine rule has never been relaxed, and a Divine providence has been recognised by those who possessed the secret of the Lord.

5. *Relation to Science.*—Now, if it is the main purpose of the book to emphasise this truth, it is of the utmost importance that we should bear it constantly in view if we would estimate rightly the character of the whole and the significance of the various parts. Yet much perplexity and needless alarm have been caused by the neglect of so obvious a rule. So strong is the fascination of all questions as to the origins of things, that many persons, accepting the Bible as the highest authority, took for granted that, when it touched on such questions, it would give definite and precise information; and when science, in the course of its advances, seemed to give a different account of some matters, there was no little alarm at the supposed "conflict of science and religion."

All this comes of losing sight of the standpoint of the book, the purpose of which is not to tell us about nature, so much as about the God of nature and providence. What the sacred

writers know and have learned on other subjects they will tell, so far as these bear on the matter in hand, and in a manner which the readers for which they wrote could comprehend. As the historian of Christianity goes back to Judaism, to show the connection of the old faith with the new, so the historian of Israel goes back to the time before the nation had a separate existence, in order to explain its origin and standing. But in the one case, as in the other, the writer passes by much that might be interesting, because it has no special bearing on his subject. As the stream of religious history is traced upwards to its source, there are many things seen on its banks, to linger over which would divert us from the main purpose, which is not to satisfy curiosity on all subjects, but to show the bearing of all on the one point in view. The facts of modern science were then hidden from men, and without scientific process and scientific language, could neither have been described nor understood; and to expect early Hebrew writers to teach us exact geological, or astronomical, or ethnographical science, is as unreasonable as to expect them to write in a modern language.

The book of nature is open to all, and what man can learn from it God leaves him to learn; but God Himself is known only to those to whom He makes Himself known. The secrets of nature He has left mankind to learn by slow degrees throughout the ages for themselves; but in mercy He made Himself known to men in the earliest times, and has revealed himself with increasing clearness as they could bear it. That the sacred writers themselves did not contemplate scientific accuracy on subjects that have a scientific reference we may see from the varying modes in which the work of creation is represented in different places. By a hard and literal interpretation it might be concluded from chap. ii. 19 that the creation of man is made to precede that of the beast of the field and the fowl of the air; yet the writer or compiler of the book must have seen no inconsistency in the accounts of the first and second chapters. And there are other passages which, if pressed literally, would exhibit remarkable variations from the account of the first chapter:* but, with unvarying voice they all proclaim the one great fact, that God is the Creator and Preserver of all things.

In like manner we perceive that the traditions of early times, in proportion as the events recede into the distance, are clothed in more general and pictorial or poetical forms, while details

* See Job xxvi. 7—11; xxxviii. 4—7: Psalm xxiv. 2; Prov. viii. 24—29. In Psalm civ. the order of Genesis i. is followed, but no reference is made to the six days.

of patriarchal life are sketched in clearer light and with firmer hand; but whether the view is near or remote, one fact shines with undimmed lustre, that God rules all things for good.

6. *Confirmed by Modern Research.*—Yet the results of modern science do not conflict with the statements of the Book of Genesis, when these are read in the sense in which they are meant to be taken. On the contrary, the increase of knowledge that has been gained in the fields of physical science, of archæology, and of topography, has added much to our understanding of these early records, and shown in many ways how accurate are the statements of the sacred writers, even on matters which were only incidental to the great subject they had before them.

(i.) In regard to physical science, it is not necessary, from our point of view, to enter into details as to where geology and the Biblical account of Creation agree, or to discuss at length the sense in which some expressions are employed in the first chapter of Genesis. We must make allowance here, as in the case of any writing, for the writer's standpoint and the understanding of those for whom he wrote. But the marvellous thing is, that if the Biblical writers were not led to set down scientific truth in scientific phrases, they were guided so as not to set down things inconsistent with scientific results. It may be safely said that the Biblical account of Creation agrees more closely with the conclusions of modern science than with any of the cosmogonies that were adopted before the sciences of geology and astronomy existed, and that of all attempts to explain the origins of things, this comes by far the nearest to the truth as science has discovered it. And this is not so much because it contains more precise details, but because it is drawn on broader lines, which science, as it advances, is enabled to fill in with ascertained facts. Science in its patient advance into the remote past, is showing more and more clearly the manner in which the world came into existence; but the goal towards which its researches are tending is the point at which Revelation stands shedding its light down the ages.

(ii.) Again, from discoveries made in recent years among the ruins of Babylon and Assyria, much light has been thrown on the early traditions of the Hebrews. We are now able to tell what were the early beliefs of the people in the distant land from which Abraham came into Canaan, and to compare them with the accounts of the Biblical writers. Thus we find, among these remains, detailed accounts of the Creation and of the Flood, as well as other traditions of matters touched upon in the early chapters of Genesis; but while the resemblances are so strong

that we cannot but see that they have a common source, the contrast between the gross polytheism on the one hand, and the pure monotheism on the other, strikes the reader at a glance. In both respects the accuracy of the Bible story is attested; for it is to the effect that the traditions of primitive times were perpetuated among the peoples living in those lands, but that Abraham was severed from the idolatrous belief of his fathers.* So also the table of the families of the earth in chapter x. has been shown by the inscriptions to correspond with the nations that lay round about the field of history which the sacred writer set himself to describe. And Haran, whose great distance from Ur of the Chaldees was long an occasion of perplexity, is now known to have been the frontier town of the same Babylonian empire, on the high road leading to the west.

(iii.) Finally, Palestine has in recent years been more carefully explored, and the habits of the people more attentively studied, with the result that the accuracy of the Biblical accounts has been marvellously confirmed. A mere romancer is never more liable to fall into error than when he enters into topographical details, or describes the modes of life of a long-past time, and, in both respects, we can test these stories of the lives of the patriarchs to the letter. We can measure their journeys; we can stand where they are represented as standing, and "lift up our eyes, and see" what they are said to have seen. And there is the other point. As the God of the Hebrew writers is high above all the passions and frailties of the heathen gods, so their men are divested of the fabulous qualities of heathen heroes: they are as human as their God is divine. The narrator who could describe the life and wanderings of the patriarchs as they are here depicted must have had the actual figures before his eye. But the mode of life which is here described was impossible at the time the land was filled with a settled population. If, after the manner of some critics, we search for a time when this mode of life prevailed, we must either go back to a period before Israel had grown into a settled nation, or come down to a time when life in Palestine had undergone a complete change. The life is the life of the Arab of the desert, and can be tested by it in minutest detail, but the scene is Palestine, and the topography is exact to the minutest detail. The narratives, therefore, came from some one who was conversant with life in Palestine when

* Attempts that have been made to show that the Biblical account of Creation was obtained from Babylon in the time of the Captivity, and re-cast in a monotheistic form in the post-Exilian writings, have not been successful. The resemblance is even more striking in the portions which the critics have not assigned to so late a date.

its inhabitants were partly settled and partly nomad, as it was in the days of the patriarchs, and as it is at the present day.

7. *Value.*—Thus, from different quarters we find facts which heighten our admiration for the accuracy of the account handed down to us in this ancient book. It may be a matter of criticism to discover the joinings of the narratives, and to trace the literary process by which the book took its present shape; but it is of far deeper interest to note the existence of a pure light in the midst of the world's darkness. It is our familiarity with it that makes us overlook the significance of the early testimony of the Hebrew people to the truth of the one God. But when we reflect that, at a time when the great nations of antiquity were stumbling in the dark on this subject, or groping their way towards it, the Hebrew race had it as their oldest tradition, we cannot but acknowledge that they received it from God Himself. And of far higher importance is it to our faith than the anticipation of the results of modern science would have been, to be assured that from hoary antiquity, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has been guiding our race and preparing it for the fulness of the times.

EXODUS.

1. *Name.*—The second book of the Pentateuch is, in the Hebrew Bible, simply entitled "Now these are the names of" . . . . or briefly, "The names of" . . . . *Exodus*, by which it is known among us, is the Greek name which was given by the Church Fathers, to indicate the principal subject of the book, the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. The later Jews, however, when they wished to designate it by its contents, with their legalistic predilection called it the book of "Damages," from the legislative element which here comes prominently into view. For, whereas the Book of Genesis is almost entirely of a narrative character, this book, like that of Numbers, is of mixed contents, the former being narrative, the latter legislative. Yet these two elements are not sharply separated the one from the other. In the middle of the account of the preparations for the Exodus we find detailed regulations for the observance of the Passover and the Law of the Firstborn (xii. 1—xiii. 16); and closely interwoven with the legislation at Sinai we have not only the particulars of the occasion under which the laws were given (xxiv.) and the account of the manner in which some of the regulations were put into execution (xxxv. 20—xxxix), but also the narrative of the Sin of the Golden Calf and the judgment to which it led (xxxii.—xxxiii).

2. *Divisions and Contents.*—The book may, however, be roughly divided into two parts, chapters i.—xviii. giving an account of the departure of Israel from Egypt, and chapters xix.—xl. relating to the ratification of the covenant and the delivery of the law at Sinai in the first and second years of the Exodus.

In the former portion we have a description of the oppression in Egypt, the story of the birth and earlier life of Moses, and his appointment to be leader of the people (i.—iv.). Then follows the account of the struggle, which is both political, between Pharaoh and Israel, and religious, between the signs of Jehovah and those of the Egyptian magicians (v.—x.). The

struggle terminates in the tenth plague and the hurried departure of Israel (xii. 29—36), closely connected with which are the institution of the Passover and the Law of the Sanctification of the Firstborn. The journey to Sinai is then narrated, with details of the provision made by God for the guidance and sustenance of the people in the wilderness (xv. 22—xvii. 7), their victory over Amalek (xvii. 8—16), and the advice given by Jethro to Moses for the ordinary administration of justice (xviii. 1—27).

The second portion of the book, starting with the accomplished fact of the deliverance from Egypt, lays down the condition of the covenant between God and Israel, the observance of which would preserve them as "a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (xix. 1—6). The condition being accepted by the people, there follow the declaration of the law and the solemn ratification of it, over the "book of the covenant" (xiv. 7—xxiv. 8). From chapter xxiv. 9 to xxxi. 18 we have an account of the stay of Moses for forty days in the Mount, during which he receives the tables of stone and detailed instructions for the making of the Tabernacle. Meantime the people sin in the making of the golden calf, and Moses intercedes for them; God makes a revelation of Himself as the Merciful and Righteous, the tables are renewed and the covenant is again confirmed (xxxii.—xxxiv.). And finally, there is a detailed description of the work of preparing and fitting the Tabernacle, which is set up on the first day of the first month of the second year of the Exodus (xxxv.—xl.).

3. *Connection with Genesis.*—The Book of Exodus exhibits an advance upon that of Genesis. We have here no longer biographies and family histories, but the beginnings of the history of the chosen nation; and in place of revelations from time to time to individuals, we have provision for a continuous communication of the Divine will to the whole people by means of divinely appointed leaders.

The people that was, in the providence of God, to be placed in the midst of all the great nations of antiquity, and out of which in the fulness of time was to radiate the light that was to lighten the whole world, is here brought into contact with one of the great ancient civilisations; and we cannot fail to perceive the fitness of the circumstances under which they were consolidated into an organised nation. Their sojourn in Egypt no doubt made them familiar with idolatry to their hurt, as the sin of the golden calf early testifies; yet they were preserved by the prevailing custom of caste in Egypt, and by their separation in the land of Goshen, from becoming mixed with the nation by whom they were enslaved. At the same time, while the rich climate and the hard

labour favoured the increase of the race, their subject condition kept them from feeling at home. Moreover, the cultivation of letters in the land of their sojourn and the existence of an organised civil life around them, must have had an educative influence, not only on Moses and the leaders, but even on the people as a whole. Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, and other "wise-hearted" men, are found fitted to undertake the difficult technical work of constructing the Tabernacle in the wilderness, though, at a later time, Solomon had to call to his assistance the skilled workmen of Tyre for the construction of the Temple. Even the conditions of the hard labour in which they were employed had the counterbalancing advantage in this respect, that it brought into prominence the native chiefs and heads of families among the Israelites, who were made responsible to the Egyptian taskmasters for the work to be accomplished.

It is also to be noted that the contest represented by the plagues of Egypt, which must have extended over several months, would in various ways prepare the people for the Exodus. As the hope of deliverance grew stronger, the feeling of national unity and independence would increase; and the relenting of Pharaoh from time to time furnished an opportunity, on every occasion on which he promised to let the people go, for a rehearsal, so to speak, of the Exodus. And thus, instead of its being a tumultuous flight, as we are sometimes inclined to regard it, the departure from Egypt took the form of an orderly march.

This book, however, rests upon the Book of Genesis, and would be incomprehensible apart from it. Though a great space of time intervenes between the two, the narrative of Exodus is a continuation of that of Genesis; and though we have here the beginnings of the national life of Israel, the elements of the national life are to be sought in an earlier period. There is not only community of race among the Israelite bondmen, there is also a community of religion which, more than their separate abode, preserves them from intermixture with their neighbours, and at once binds them together and furnishes the motive for their desire to depart. The servitude of centuries has not crushed out their feeling of brotherhood nor obliterated the recollection of the promise given to their fathers. It is impossible to explain the solid movement of the whole body, notwithstanding their own cowardice, and in spite of the oppression of Egypt, except by the fact that they had already a consciousness of a Divine calling and the prospect of a settled home. Whatever may have been their religious observances in Egypt, they evidently did not acknowledge the gods of the country, but regarded themselves as belonging to a God who made Himself

known to their fathers, and who could say, "All the earth is mine" (xix. 5). It was not the law given at Sinai that made them for the first time the people of Jehovah; it was the covenant, on which the law rested, that bound them to Him as a peculiar treasure; and that covenant, though it assumed a more definite form at the Exodus, went back to the time of their fathers in Canaan.*

4. *Connection with subsequent Books.*—On the other hand, this Book of Exodus is so related to the subsequent books that they would be incomprehensible apart from it. We have here the record of events which became fundamental parts of the nation's traditions, and the explanation of ideas and expressions which wrought themselves into the thoughts and literature of all succeeding times. The great deliverance from Egypt is celebrated in national song, underlies all the historical writings, and by the earliest of the prophets is assumed as a matter not to be disputed; so that even critics who maintain that this account of the Exodus was written very late do not deny the historical character of the event. The prophets not only appeal to the facts, but attach to them the same religious significance with which they are here invested;† the very language employed in chapter iv. 22, 23, is used by Hosea, and made the basis of his argument with the degenerate people of his time (Hos. xi. 1).

Equally fundamental is the idea that Israel is "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (xix. 6); "all Israel is considered, from the theocratic point of view, a sacerdotal body, a people of priests."‡ It was, indeed, this conviction that Israel as a nation was God's peculiar people that enabled them to fulfil their destiny; and though the abuse of the truth led them into careless indifference or haughty self-sufficiency, the truth was there, and could be appealed to from time to time by the teachers who arose among them, so as to arouse the national conscience. We must not loose sight of the fact that God reveals Himself first as the Lord of the whole earth, and shows his power alike upon Pharaoh and upon the forces of nature; and then in virtue of this power assumes to Himself Israel as his peculiar treasure. The prophet Amos gives precisely the same view of God's relations to Israel (Amos ix. 6, 7); and equally inconsistent with it is the perversion of it by the Jews into the principle that Jehovah was only the God of Israel, and the view of some in

* See chap. vi. 1—8, and compare what is written in Rom. iv. and Gal. iii.

† Amos iii. 1—2; Hosea xii. 9; xiii. 4.

‡ The quotation is from Reuss, the father of the Grafian hypothesis, on Hosea iv. 6, and forms an instructive contrast to the view of some that there was no priest-people till after the Exile.

modern times that the idea of Jehovah as a national God expanded into the idea of Jehovah as the Lord of the whole earth.

As regards the observances and laws contained in this book, it is possible that some of them are based on older and simpler usages. The mention of a feast and sacrifice in chapters v. 1—3, x. 9, seems to point to something of this kind, as also the mention of priests in chapter xix. 22, 24, before the formal setting apart of the sons of Levi in chapter xxviii. 1. So there seems to have been a "tent of meeting" outside the camp (xxxiii. 7—11) before the Tabernacle was set up. Yet, if there was such earlier usages, they received at the Exodus a new destination and distinctive meaning, so that in the succeeding history they are traced back to this period and associated with its great events.

5. *Literary Form.*—In literary form the book does not present the same regularity as that of Genesis. A merely cursory reading is sufficient to show that there is not a precise chronological arrangement in the narrative, nor an artistic arrangement of the laws. Thus, for example, after it has been told how Moses and Aaron had an interview with Pharaoh (chap. v.), their genealogy is given in chapter vi., and they are spoken of as if they were mentioned for the first time. Again, in chapter xvi. 33—34 mention is made of the laying up of a pot of manna before the Testimony, although the making of the Ark of the Testimony is not described till chapter xxv. So also chapter xxxiv. contains commands which had already been given in chapter xxiii.

In general we may say that the book does not by any means give a full account of all that happened in the period to which it refers, and that there is no attempt to set down the laws in a systematised form. It should not be forgotten that the book was written for a people to whom the events of the history were a common tradition, and among whom the observances were matters of established usage, the object being to exhibit them in their beginnings. Accordingly it has the appearance rather of a collection of separate pieces, put together substantially in the form in which they were originally composed, than of a sustained orderly composition. Yet, though literary criticism may succeed in exhibiting, in a general way, the several pieces, the attempt to trace the sources from which they came is far from successful, much less the endeavour to assign their respective orders and dates. From the prevalent practice of writing in Egypt long before the time of the Exodus, and from the several occasions in which writing is distinctly mentioned in the book, it is natural to conclude that tables of laws and narratives of events com-

posed in the wilderness were handed down to a succeeding time; and from the modest way in which Moses is mentioned, as contrasted with the tone of Deuteronomy xxxiv. 10—12, which is from a later hand, it is reasonable to suppose that the great lawgiver himself left such written documents, which were made use of in the composition of the book as it now lies before us. The mere fact that the book exhibits this composite character is against the idea that it is a late fabrication, designed to give support to an unhistorical tradition.

The view put forward in recent times that the legislation contained in the sections xx. 22—xxiii., xxiv. belongs to the time of settlement in Canaan and allows worship by sacrifice at any place is inconsistent with xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23—24. The circumstances of the life of the desert as compared with the scattering of the people over the country of Canaan would lead us to expect that worship at a central sanctuary preceded, and did not follow, the worship at different places.

6. *Modern Discoveries.*— Modern research has contributed much to show the accuracy of details of various kinds contained in the Book of Exodus. There is evinced an acquaintance with the physical features and social life of ancient Egypt and with the topography of the desert which could only have been gained in the circumstances which the book describes; and as our knowledge of those times increases the minute accuracy of the records becomes more striking. It has been shown that the "plagues" of Egypt were intensified forms of common visitations, and that the order in which they occur agrees with the progression of the seasons in that country; and though our knowledge of the ancient topography is yet very imperfect, the results of recent explorations lead us to expect important revelations in this direction in the future.

Upper Egypt, with its monuments above ground, is better known to us than the Delta, where ancient remains, if they exist, lie buried under the soil; but the discoveries made quite recently at Tell-el-Maskhûtah show us what might be expected from more extended excavations. It is now well known that there were in the Delta tribes of kindred origin and language to the Israelites; and when Abraham went down to sojourn in the country, the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings were reigning in the land, and he found no difficulty in holding intercourse with the people. It is also pretty well agreed that Ramses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and Menephtah II., who began to reign in 1325 B.C., the Pharaoh of the Exodus; counting back from which date 430 years, for the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, we come to one of the Shepherd Kings to whom Joseph may

have been prime minister. The excavations at Tell-el-Maskhûtah have brought to light Pithom in the region of Succoth, which was built by Ramses II., and exhibited extensive store chambers such as the Israelites are related to have built (chap. i. 11). Thus, although as yet actual traces of Israel in Egypt may not be said to be found, it is very hazardous to predict, as some have been bold enough to do, that such will not be found. The accuracy of the narrative is, at all events, exhibited in a remarkable manner, and this leads us to look for more light as research goes on.

The discoveries which have been mentioned seem likely also to clear up the obscurity resting on the route followed by the Israelites in their departure from Egypt. A closer study of the topography leads to the conclusion that the Red Sea extended, at the time of the Exodus, considerably farther north than at present, and that in all probability the *Yam Sûph*, or Sea of Reeds (translated Red Sea in our Bibles), which the people crossed, corresponded to what at a later time took the form of one of the lakes. Etham "in the edge of the wilderness" (xiii. 20) no doubt corresponds to the Egyptian frontier district of Atuma, in which a document of the time of the Exodus represents shepherds as pasturing their flocks; and it is to be expected that continued patient exploration will bring to light from old papyri and from the mounds of the Delta many similar confirmations of the accuracy of the simple narrative of the Book of Exodus.

7. *Credibility.*—We come to the conclusion that, in the Book of Exodus, we have a credible account of the great events connected with the departure of Israel from Egypt, and of their consolidation, under a constitution given by the hand of Moses, into a nation with a great future before them. This conclusion is confirmed by the minute accuracy of details just referred to, and is the only conclusion that seems in keeping with an unbiassed interpretation of the concurrent testimony of the nation from the earliest times. It seems also to be more credible in itself than the supposition that a number of tribes, with the slightest bonds of national coherence, found their way by merely natural impulse into Canaan, and there grew into an independent people with distinctive religious faith and institutions.

No doubt the legislation which is ascribed to Moses had prospective reference to a settled life in a country like Palestine, and the ordinances of worship and ceremonial are very detailed and minute. But this is no valid objection if it is borne in mind that Egypt was a land in which the people of Israel must have become familiar with an organised ritual, and if it be admitted

that the Exodus was not an aimless departure, but a start for a country associated with the memory of the fathers of the nation, a country whose condition, as the most recent discoveries prove, had long been familiar to dwellers in Egypt.

To what extent the laws as originally given were modified in course of time, and how far, in their original forms, they corresponded with what now stands written in the law books, we shall probably never know, because we do not know precisely through what process these books passed; but to deny the substantial accuracy of the record before us is an excess of criticism which would not be applied to other ancient documents, and would make it almost impossible to determine the true course of the succeeding history.

LEVITICUS.

1. *Name.*—The third book of the Pentateuch, beginning with the words "Then called the Lord unto Moses," is simply entitled in the Hebrew Bible "Then called" . . . The names by which the Jews indicate its contents are "The Book of the Law of Offerings," or, more commonly, "The Book of the Law of the Priests;" and the latter is, strictly speaking, more appropriate than the Greek name of *Leviticus* which we now employ, since the "Levites" are only mentioned once, and that incidentally (chap. xxv. 32, 33), in the whole book, whereas the "priests" are everywhere referred to.

The book, though closely connected with those of Exodus and Numbers, is distinguished from them in being entirely of legislative contents. Yet the legislation is set in an historical framework. The scene is laid in Sinai (xxv. 1, xxvi. 46, xxvii. 34); the circumstances of the desert life are referred to or implied (iv. 12, xiii. 46, xiv. 8, xvi. 10, &c.); details are given of the putting into execution of certain of the regulations (viii.—x.); and an incident of the desert life is mentioned as giving occasion to the promulgation of a particular law (xxiv. 10—23).

2. *Contents.*—The laws contained in this book have less of a moral and civil than of a religious and ceremonial character. They are, for the most part, such laws as would be committed to the priests for execution, or whose observance would be under their special care, the functions and standing of the priests themselves being included among them. The first seven chapters deal with the various offerings: the Burnt Offering (i.), the Meal* Offering (ii.), the Peace Offering (iii.), the Sin Offering (iv.—v. 13), and the Trespass Offering (v. 14—vi. 7). The regulations concerning these are followed by special instructions to the priests with regard to their due observance (vi. 8—vii. 38); and

* So the Revised Version rightly translates the word denoting the bloodless offering, which the Authorized Version renders meat-offering.

in chapters viii. to x. we have a detailed description of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, with an account of the offence of Nadab and Abihu, and certain regulations, suggested by the occurrence, for the proper performance of the priestly functions.

The five succeeding chapters deal with matters of uncleanliness and purification. Thus we have in chapter xi. a list of the animals that may and of those that may not be used for food, and the ceremonies to be used in cases of defilement by those that are impure; in chapter xii. the laws for purification after childbirth; and in chapters xiii. to xv., the laws of leprosy and other defilements. The sixteenth chapter contains the institution of the Day of Atonement and the ceremonial of its observance. The seventeenth chapter contains the law forbidding the eating of blood, and the eighteenth, introduced by the words "I am the Lord your God," contains the laws of consanguinity and the forbidden degrees of marriage.

The next two chapters (xix., xx.) are closely related, the former beginning with the words "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy," and the latter ending, "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples that ye should be mine." They are of very varied contents, warnings against idolatry and the idolatrous customs of the neighbouring nations (xix. 4, xx. 2—5, 23) being mixed with commands of a moral character, injunctions to respect the aged and to deal kindly with the afflicted, directions for the sowing and reaping of the ground, and laws of cleanness and chastity. Then begins another series of ritual and religious laws, chapters xxi. and xxii. relating to the proper condition of officiating priests and the quality of the offerings; chapter xxiii. enumerating and explaining the set feasts; chapter xxiv. ordaining the oil for the sacred lamps and flour for the shewbread, and containing also the law on blasphemy, with which are combined a few other regulations.

Chapter xxv. contains the laws for the Sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee, and chapter xxvi. looks like a conclusion to the whole book. It has a solemn call to keep God's statutes and commandments, with specific promises in case of obedience and threatenings even more explicit in case of disobedience; and ends, "These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the Lord made between Him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses." Yet, after this formal conclusion, we have in chapter xxvii. regulations for vows and things devoted, concluding again in a similar manner, "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai."

3. *Arrangement.*—The foregoing summary is sufficient to show how little regard has been had to systematic arrangement of the materials of the Book of Leviticus; and a closer inspection reveals other literary peculiarities of a striking kind. It is observable that the laws appear in the form of separate collections, the several groups being very often provided with special headings and conclusions; that laws relating to the same matters are not all found in the same place; that there are repetitions of the same laws in different parts of the book; and that matters of a very dissimilar nature stand in close proximity.

The commands are all expressly or implicitly ascribed to God; but the mode in which they are proclaimed, and the persons to whom they are addressed, are very various. As a rule it is said that "the Lord spake unto Moses," but sometimes we have "the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron," and we find even "the Lord spake unto Aaron" (x. 8). And when it is Moses that is primarily addressed, he is told sometimes to "speak unto the children of Israel," sometimes "to speak unto" or "command Aaron and his sons," at other times to "speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel," or to "speak unto Aaron and his sons, and all the children of Israel." These are not all the varieties in the modes of address, and the laws with similar headings are found scattered up and down the book in the most striking manner. Even the first seven chapters, which seem to form a code by themselves regulating the offerings, and have a formal conclusion (vii. 37, 38), are interrupted several times by such separate headings. Again, a comparison of chapter xviii. with chapter xx. will bring out the fact that many of the regulations are repeated in the same or similar words; and there are many other instances of repetitions in other places.

The laws, in fact, seem to bear on their own face that they were given forth "at sundry times and in divers manners." And when we remember that the whole period intervening between the setting up of the Tabernacle described in the end of Exodus, and the departure from Sinai, was but a month and twenty days,* within which time the events recorded in the early chapters of Numbers took place, it will appear far from probable that the laws in this Book of Leviticus were promulgated in one body during the brief remaining time. Far more likely is it that just as Moses was enjoined to make the Tabernacle "after the pattern that was shown him in the Mount,"† so we have here before us the detailed regulations for the worship and life of the people which, according to the revelations received by him at

* Compare Exodus xl. 17 with Numbers x. 11.

† Exodus xxv. 40; xxvi. 30; xxvii. 8.

Sinai, were given forth from time to time to the persons concerned, and that they were preserved in their separate form.

4. *Character of the Legislation.*—It is also observable that, though we have in this book regulations extending to the minutest details of worship and life, these are, in many cases, stated in such terms as to imply that the persons to whom they are addressed had already some acquaintance with them. Observances are referred to as if they were already understood, and the laws bearing upon them have the appearance of regulations of practices already existing. Thus the very first laws of the book begin with the words, "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord," &c. (i. 2, ii. 1, iii. 1), as if it were a well-established custom to do so. In the same way, the regulations in regard to vows (xxvii.) presuppose the custom of making such; and many of the prescriptions, as, for example, those relating to the rending of clothes and the cutting of the flesh for the dead (x. 6, xix. 27—28), have reference to customs which evidently are well known and commonly practised. It is thus implied, as it is everywhere implied in the Pentateuch, that God's people had a religion and a worship before the time of Moses. Cain and Abel bring offerings, which are both denominated by a general name, which in Leviticus is used exclusively to denote the bloodless offering (Gen. iv. 3—5); Noah builds an altar and offers burnt offerings (Gen. viii. 20—22); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob build altars and call upon the name of the Lord; and the covenant with Abraham is ratified over the bodies of such animals as are prescribed in the law for sacrifice (Gen. xv. 9—21). So also, during the struggle with Pharaoh which preceded the Exodus, the leaders repeatedly demand that the people should be allowed to go and worship and offer sacrifices to their God in the wilderness.*

The peculiar form which the pre-Mosaic offerings exhibits, and the general terms in which they are mentioned, show that the writer of the Book of Genesis does not seek to transfer to patriarchal times what was a later institution, but that he regards them as instances of a more primitive usage. The distinction of clean and unclean animals, also, is pre-Mosaic, and so is the prohibition of blood. We know, moreover, that the nations with whom Israel was early brought into contact had well-defined systems of worship. Phœnician and Assyrian monuments show that these nations had sacrificial and other rites resembling those of the Hebrews, and the Egyptians had a most elaborate priestly system. Laban the Syrian is as familiar with sacrifice as his kinsman Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 54), and

* See Exodus, § 4, p. 29.

Jethro, the priest of Midian, "takes a burnt offering and sacrifices for God," and Aaron and all the elders of Israel "come and eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God" (Exod. xviii. 12). The peculiarity of the Mosaic system is that, recognising such primitive and general customs, it gives a new sanction and significance to them, and so directs and employs them as to provide an orderly system for the regulation of the life of the people.

Above all, the observances are lifted out of the sphere of mere common and immemorial usage and endued with significance as symbols of the religious beliefs of Israel and memorials of great events in their history. They are thus made to minister to the nation's training and development by knitting them together in a visible bond around the recollection of their national birth. The Sabbath itself, which is as old as the race and a distinctive memorial of the creation, is also made a sign of the special covenant between God and Israel (Exod. xxxi. 12—17), and even associated with the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. v. 15). The three great pilgrimage feasts, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, fell at three well-marked periods of the agricultural year: the Passover at the beginning of barley harvest, Pentecost at the close of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Tabernacles at the final ingathering of the fruits. Yet, though this reference to the seasons of the year is preserved in the ceremonial prescribed for the feasts, a new and higher reference is added. The Passover is pre-eminently a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt; and the booths of branches in which the people are enjoined to dwell at the Feast of Tabernacles are to remind them of the time when they dwelt in tents in the wilderness.

5. *Unity.*—Besides the regulation and consecration of earlier usages, and the quickening of national sentiment, we have to notice very particularly the mode in which, from even the most minute prescription as to food or dress up to the most distinctive sacred rite, everything is calculated to stimulate and educate the religious feeling and the spiritual life. Sanitary and dietary laws are not laid down as such, but are made distinctive marks of the consecrated life of a chosen people; details of ritual are not prescribed with a view to enhance the imposing character of the forms of worship, but to express the sense of the holiness of the God in whose service they are exercised.

At the recurring festal seasons Israel is not simply to "rejoice as the nations" * because a bountiful nature provides the supply of material wants, but to rejoice before the Lord and remember

* Hosea ix. 1.

His special goodness to His own people. They are taught that the season does not hallow the ordinance, but the ordinance the season; and the ritual of the most ordinary kind is so ordered, and a gradation from lower to higher in the feasts is so marked, that the deeper necessities of the heart are felt and provided for. The sin-offering, and the impressive ceremonial of the Day of Atonement may be said to be the culminating points of the Levitical offerings, tending to awaken the sense of sin, and the need of forgiveness, and to impress the dullest mind with the spiritual meaning of the whole system.

It is from this point of view that we observe the unity that pervades what seems at first a confused and imperfectly organised body of laws. Israel is to be a holy people, because the Lord their God is holy. Therefore no detail of their life is common or secular, no customary observance a mere custom, no rite a mere ceremony. Hence, in the statement of the laws, there is no sharp distinction between ceremonial, civil, and sacred; particulars relating to the one or the other are found closely connected, because all come under the one common category of "holiness to the Lord." In the same way, while primitive usages resting on the instinctive feelings of worship are consecrated with a new reference, usages of heathen nations, which had become associated with idolatry, are prohibited. The people of Israel were thus at every turn reminded that they were a peculiar people; and, in the infancy of their national life, by means of these outward and carnal ordinances, they were being taught, in an elementary way suited to their comprehension, what, in the full light of the Gospel, is the highest law of spiritual activity: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

6. *Critical Views.*—The Book of Leviticus forms the greater part of what critics of the advanced school call the Levitical Code, the composition of which is by them ascribed to the time succeeding the Exile.* It is maintained that no such collection of laws as this book contains could have been promulgated in the Mosaic period or for long after it; that, on the contrary, the distinctive feasts of Israel grew up in Palestine, by natural processes, out of agricultural festivals such as were practised by the Canaanite inhabitants; and that the elaborate system of the Levitical Code was the result of the studies of the scribes during the Exile, and an attempt to give a high authority to later usages and to laws which then came into operation for the first time, by the fiction of ascribing them to Moses. In support of this view

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 10, pp 11, 12.

it is held that the legislation of this Code exhibits a more developed priestly and religious character than either the Book of the Covenant or the Deuteronomic Code; and also that there is no trace of the observance of the Levitical Code in the pre-Exilian history.

Two instances will be sufficient to show how inconclusive and misleading is this mode of reasoning. Regulations for the observance of the Passover are contained in all the three Codes;* and it no doubt fell, as has been already said (§ 4), at the time of an old spring festival. But, whereas the two so-called older Codes make no reference to an agricultural ceremony, and expressly say that it is to be observed in the month of Abib, because in that month the children of Israel came out of Egypt, the Levitical Code, which on the theory ought to show a development beyond natural custom, prescribes the waving of a sheaf of barley as an observance at the Passover time (Lev. xxiii. 9—14), and thus suggestively connects it with the beginning of barley harvest.

Again, it is quite true that there is no mention of the observance of the Day of Atonement in the pre-Exilian historical writings; but neither is it mentioned in the post-Exilian Books of Chronicles. Indeed, because it is not mentioned with other feasts observed on the return from Babylon, some critics go the length of maintaining that its institution dates even later than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. But, on their own principle, they ought to go farther; for the first mention of the Day of Atonement, outside the Levitical Code, occurs in the writings of Josephus and Philo and the New Testament; so that we should have the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews basing his argument from the imperfection of the old Levitical system on an ordinance which was instituted almost in his own day. Indeed, the silence of the post-Exilian writings is, in some particulars, as remarkable as that of the pre-Exilian, and proves that this whole mode of reasoning on the subject cannot be relied upon.

7. *Credibility and Value.*—Although the silence of the historical books as to the Levitical system is remarkable, and although we know that the actual worship of the Israelites was far short of the ideal, we must not hastily conclude that the law was a dead letter and of none effect. Many things took place in the history that do not find a place in the historical books; and the observance of outward rites and ceremonies, even if it was mixed with superstition, was a bond uniting the people together. The observances themselves were standing witnesses and perpetual

* Exod. xxiii. 15 (compare xii. 17); xxxiv. 18; Deut. xvi. 1—8; Lev. xxiii. 4—8.

memorials of the religion and of the facts which they symbolized, just as the Christian sacraments administered in the most superstitious ages of the Church were visible memorials of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity.

And there were always in Israel, as in every nation, some who could look beneath the surface and derive edification from what, to the mass around them, was a dead form. The fundamental truths underlying the system, and the meaning of the symbolism, were not lost sight of, as the writings of the prophets testify; and the value of the law as a spiritual educator is clearly evident from many of the Psalms. But such a stage of religious consciousness could only have come to maturity by slow degrees. The expressive ceremonial of oft-repeated sacrifice must have been to the reflective and pious in Old Testament times a stepping-stone to the sacrifice of broken hearts. Not only to us, in the light of the New Testament, does the ritual of Leviticus reflect the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, but these things must have been, as the writer to the Hebrews expresses it, "a figure for the time then present," "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. ix. 9, x. 1), and thus served, in God's providence, to prepare for the manifestation of Him who was to be "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. x. 4).

NUMBERS.

1. *Name.*—The name *Numbers*, by which the fourth book of the Pentateuch is commonly designated, is the Latin equivalent of the title given by the Greek translators of the Old Testament. It was employed with reference to the two numberings of the people which appear prominently in the book, in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first instance (chapter i.), and afterwards in the plains of Moab (xxvi.). In the same way the Jews, when they designate this book by its contents, call it "Musterings;" but it is more commonly indicated, in the same manner as the other books of the Pentateuch, by one of the opening words, "Then spake . . . ." or "In the wilderness," taken from the first verse, "Then spake the Lord unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai." The book resembles Exodus in that it is partly narrative and partly legislative in contents, and presents the two elements in close combination; but in situation it stands closely related to Leviticus, and is its natural continuation.

2. *Divisions and Contents.*—The Book of Numbers may be divided into *three* sections. In the *first* section, embracing chapters i. to x., the scene is, as in Leviticus, at Sinai, and the contents are very closely related to those of that book. It begins with the command to number the people, given on the first day of the second month of the second year from the departure from Egypt, or exactly a month after the Tabernacle was set up, as noted in Exodus xl. 17. The first two chapters relate how the numbering was effected, and give the order in which the various tribes were commanded to encamp and to march on the wilderness journey. As the Levites were not numbered with the other tribes, we are then told, in the third and fourth chapters, how a separate enumeration of them was made, as also of the firstborn males of all the people, for whom the Levites were substituted to perform the sacred service of the Tabernacle. These chapters also define the different parts of service in which the different families of the Levites were employed. The next two chapters are legislative in character, containing regulations for the exclu-

sion of lepers from the camp, the law of restitution for trespass, the ceremony of the water of jealousy, the law of the Nazarite, and the formula to be employed by the priests in blessing the people. The seventh chapter describes the offerings brought by the princes of the tribes, on twelve successive days, on the occasion of the dedication of the Tabernacle; and the eighth relates to the lighting of the lamps of the golden candlestick, and describes the consecration of the Levites to the service of the sanctuary. In the ninth chapter we have an account of the observance of the Passover at Sinai, and regulations for the observance of a supplementary Passover in the second month by any who should be ceremonially unable to do so at the statutory time. This section concludes with an account of the manner in which the pillar of cloud regulated the movements of the camp (ix. 15—23), and the way in which the silver trumpets were employed to give signals for concerted action (x. 1—10).

The *second* section of the book (x. 11—xxii. 1) is concerned with the journey from Sinai to Moab, and covers the period from the twentieth day of the second month of the second year to the fortieth year of the Exodus. It does not profess to give an account of all that passed in this long period; it does not even give a condensed and orderly account of the doings and movements of the people. It gives rather a series of episodes in the wilderness life, with various laws, arranged, however, mainly in chronological order, up to the time when the people "came into the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho." Thus we have the murmurings and unbelief of the people at Taberah, where they were punished by burning (xi. 1—3); at Kibroth-hattaavah, where the Spirit was poured out upon the seventy elders, and the people were rebuked by the sending of the quails (xi. 4—35); and finally at Kadesh, after the return of the spies, when the sentence of forty years' wandering was pronounced (xiii., xiv.). So we have the revolt of Aaron and Miriam against the authority of Moses punished by the leprosy of Miriam (xii.); and the revolt of Korah and his company punished by the death of the revolters and rebuked by the sign of Aaron's rod (xvi., xvii.). Interspersed with these historical notices, we have various laws, in chapters xv., xviii., and xix., conspicuous among which is the ceremonial of the water of purification made from the ashes of the red heifer (xix.) The next two chapters describe the journey from Kadesh, round Edom, and through the territories of Arad, Sihon, and Og, into the plains of Moab, with the episodes of the unbelief of Moses and Aaron at Meribah (xx. 2—13), and the visitation of the fiery serpents (xxi. 5—9).

In the *last* section of the book (xxii. 2—xxxvi.) the Israelites

are in the plains of Moab. Balaam, sent by Balak to curse them, pronounces on them a remarkable blessing (xxii. 2—xxiv. 25); the relapse into idolatry at Shittim is signally punished (xxv.); another numbering of the people is made (xxvi.); Joshua is designated as the successor of Moses (xxvii. 12—23); the two tribes and a half receive their inheritance on the east of Jordan (xxxii.); directions are given for the division of the land to the remaining tribes (xxxiv.); and regulations made for setting apart forty-eight cities of the Levites, of which six are to be cities of refuge (xxxv.). In the midst of these matters this section also has a chapter relating to the encounter with the Midianites, through whose instigation Israel had been led into sin at Shittim (xxxi.); a list of the wilderness stations (xxxiii. 1—49); and a number of laws, on inheritance, the relation of Israel to the heathen nations, and feasts and offerings (xxvii. 1—11, xxviii.—xxx., xxxiii. 50—56, xxxvi.): the whole concluding with the words "These are the commandments and the judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho."

3. *Period covered by the Book.*—A long and important period of the history of Israel is covered by the book of Numbers. If we deduct the fourteen months spent in the journey from Egypt to Sinai and in the vicinity of the sacred mountain, the whole remaining portion of the forty years spent between Egypt and Canaan falls within the book.

Now, when we remember that the first ten chapters refer to the sojourn at Sinai, and that the rest of the book, as we have seen, consists mainly of episodes in the remaining journey, with laws and regulations of considerable amount, it will be seen that we have almost no record of about thirty-eight years of the desert life. There is, indeed, a marked difference in the manner in which the journey to Sinai with the events that occurred there, and the subsequent journey to Kadesh, are related, and the brief account given of the movements of the succeeding thirty-eight years. Whereas we can trace the advance of the host from the shores of the Red Sea to the foot of the sacred mount, and can follow the line of their progress from Sinai to Kadesh, the long years of penal wandering are passed over in a few words; and a bare list of the stations, with a few episodes of the journey, make up all the notice we have of the whole period. Events are crowded into fourteen months in a manner that makes it difficult to find room for them, but the events of thirty-eight years, if we except those of the closing year, are left almost entirely to conjecture.

It is only from an observation of the localities in which the time was spent, and a consideration of the condition of the people at its close, that we can form any idea of the life of Israel during the years of wandering. It may be that no great events are recorded because there were none to relate, and that, for the most part, the daily life of the people for these thirty-eight years was little more than the monotonous round of caring for the existence of themselves and their flocks, which makes up the life of the children of the desert at the present day. Yet the period was not without its effect on the character of the future nation. Like the long uneventful period of the sojourn in Egypt, it formed a stage of transition. A new race, inured to the hardships of the wilderness, grew up; collisions with neighbouring tribes and peoples, of which we have notices or indications, trained them to the use of arms; the necessities of their daily life called forth individual courage, self-help, self-reliance, while they were preserved from degenerating into a number of petty isolated tribes by the constitution which had been set up at Sinai.

4. *The Desert of the Wandering.*—It has often been wondered how the desert provided subsistence or even afforded room for the large host of Israel during so many years. Some have even declared the account of the forty years' wandering to be altogether incredible, or merely a legendary growth of late tradition, devised to magnify the early history of the nation. But a closer examination of the physical character of the peninsula of Sinai and the Desert of the Wandering, made by explorers in recent times, as well as an observation of the modes of life of the present inhabitants, while they have shown that many of the popular conceptions in regard to the desert have to be modified or abandoned, have also proved that the Biblical accounts relating to this period are not to be summarily rejected as unhistorical.

In dealing with the Book of Exodus (§ 6) it was pointed out that excavations in the Delta have thrown new light upon the accounts of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt and the route they followed on their departure. In the same way, the route from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai has of late years been found to present the features ascribed to it by the Biblical writers. On one important point, in regard to which uncertainty had existed, we have now certain information: the peak known by the name of Jebel Sufsâfeh, forming the northern end of the traditional Mount Sinai, is found to have all the features answering to the description of the Mount from which the law was proclaimed, with a plain in front of it sufficient to accommodate the assembled people on that memorable occasion.

The Desert of Sinai itself, it is now known, was capable of supporting a large population at the time of the Exodus. The Pharaohs of that time maintained a garrison in the peninsula to look after the numerous workmen employed in iron, copper, and turquoise mines. The remains of smelting furnaces prove that a large amount of timber must have been consumed in these operations; although timber has now entirely disappeared, and with it what must have been a considerable fertility has vanished. Even at the present day the peninsula contains many valleys watered by pleasant streams and teeming with natural vegetation; and the trees that in certain spots have been spared, as well as others that had been planted by old monkish colonists, show how the mountain torrents which are common at certain seasons, and plentiful rain, such as we know fell when Israel was in Sinai,* may be restrained and turned to good account. With an almost total neglect of cultivation, and a simple dependence on what Nature sends, the country supports a large number of Arabs with their flocks,† and must have been immensely more productive at the time of the Exodus.

It is also possible to follow the general course of the Israelites, though perhaps as yet not to identify their successive halting-places, as they emerged from the rocky peninsula and entered upon the wilderness of Paran, in which they spent the years of wandering. Here also the country must have undergone great physical changes. The district immediately to the north of the Desert of the Wandering, known as the Negeb or South Country, retains numerous traces of extensive vineyards and careful cultivation, and, though it is now little else than a barren waste, must have been at least as fertile as the cultivated parts of Palestine are at the present day. The blight of barrenness, however, has fallen upon the whole country, and shows itself in increasing intensity as we proceed southward. We are therefore safe in concluding that the wilderness of Paran, bare and bleak as it is now, was in former times proportionately fertile. The numerous traces of human dwellings, even in what are now the barest portions, and, in more favoured places, the remains of dams and terraces to husband the rainfall, show that the country was capable of supporting a large population.

5. *The Desert Life.*—From the physical conditions of the country

* See Psalms lxviii. 7—9; lxxvii. 17.

† The lamented Professor Palmer, to whom we are indebted for the best recent information, as the result of his expedition at the outbreak of the Egyptian rebellion, estimated the whole number of Sinai Arabs capable of military service, taking the Desert as far east as Petra, and the peninsula itself, at about 50,000.

and the mode of life of its present inhabitants, we can form some idea of the daily life of the Israelites during their long wandering in the desert. It would be a mistake to suppose that the whole multitude marched day after day, and pitched night after night, for forty long years, making an endless round of the desert. A continuous forward movement, no doubt, was made in the journey to Sinai, and afterwards in the journeys from Sinai to Kadesh, and from Kadesh to the plains of Moab, when there was a distinct goal in view. But during the thirty-eight years, the tribes would be scattered over the wilderness to seek pasturage for their flocks, according to the custom of the Arabs at the present day, the Tabernacle, surrounded by the Levites and the leaders, forming the rallying point, which, like the camp at head-quarters of a modern tribe, was moved from time to time as occasion required

The stations given in the list in chap. xxxiii. are, in all probability, the stations at which the Tabernacle was successively set up, while the tribes may have been dispersed to considerable distances on all sides. In a similar way the Arab tribes are found at a distance of many miles from the headquarters of their camp, according to the exigencies of their flocks; and we are to suppose that, though miraculous provision was made for the wants of Israel, the ordinary provision of nature was not neglected, and that part of the purpose of the long sojourn in the desert was to inure them to hardship by daily toil as a preparation for the work of conquest that lay before them. So long as they wandered about in this scattered fashion, their movements would be a matter of indifference to the powerful and settled nations, on whose borders they hovered, just as the Arabs of the present day are not molested by the authorities of Egypt or Syria; but as soon as they made a concerted movement to advance upon Canaan, they were vigorously resisted (xiv. 40—45, xx. 14—21).

6. *Relation to succeeding Books.*—The fragmentary and brief details which are here recorded concerning the desert life are suggestive in view of the succeeding history of Israel. Very little is said about the worship of the people in this period; we are left to suppose that, while at the Tabernacle itself the ritual appointed at Sinai was in some manner observed, a great part of the people, owing to their distance, would not be able, or able only occasionally, to take part in it. In connection with the Passover observed at Sinai (ix. 1—14), regulations are given for the observance of the feast by those who could not celebrate it on the proper day. No doubt the circumstances of the daily life imposed similar restrictions in regard to other observances, and

from the narrative in Joshua v. we gather that distinctive requirements of the law had not been observed in the wilderness. We thus perceive, at the very outset of the nation's history, that anomaly which has perplexed criticism, of a law ordained and in force, while it was, to a great extent, neglected or held in abeyance.

There is an apparent inconsistency between the accounts of the setting up of an elaborate Tabernacle service and the statements of the prophets * that Israel in the wilderness served strange gods; but it is not the inconsistency of contradictory written accounts, but the inconsistency of human nature, of which Israel is ever a striking example. It is not necessary to go to the historical books, whether pre-Exilian or post-Exilian, for proofs of the non-observance or violation of the law. The books of the Pentateuch, which record its institution, give the most glaring instances of its violation; the golden calf was made under the very shadow of Sinai; the sin of Baal-Peor and the commotion of the mixed multitude show how deeply ingrained were the elements of heathenism; and from these books, which detail so minutely the ritual and worship, we cannot gather much as to the extent to which the ritual and worship were observed. Even at this early stage of their history, the people of Israel, chosen not for their own merits, and beloved in spite of their sins, are a witness to the eternal truth of the grace of God.

7. *Literary Features.*—The Book of Numbers, as a literary work, has the same features as the other books of the Pentateuch. The minute circumstantiality of detail, and the special suitability of many of the laws to the desert life, show that these materials belong to that early period. On the other hand, the expression "While the children of Israel were in the wilderness" (xv. 32) gives indication of a later hand in the composition; the "Book of the Wars of the Lord," from which a quotation is made (xxi. 14), was evidently an older production than the book that quotes it, and probably the same may be said of the other snatches of song quoted in the same chapter (verses 17—18, 27—30). Again, the fact that Moses is said to have written the list of stations given in chap. xxxiii. affords a presumption that he did not write the narrative which refers to it.

We find also the same indifference to strictly chronological order, and the same mixture of legal and historical matter that we find in Exodus; and some of the laws in this book are repetitions or supplements of laws already given in Leviticus.† But

* Hosea ix. 10; Amos v. 25 ff.; Ezek. xx. 15 ff. Compare Lev. xvii. 7.

† Compare, for example, Num. xv. 1—16 with Lev. i.—vii.; Num. v. 5—10 with Lev. v 5 ff., vi. 5 ff.; Num. xv. 22—28 with Lev. iv. 13 ff.

literary features like these, and the complexity of the whole situation disclosed in this book, preclude the supposition that we have before us a late and legendary story. An invented story would have presented fewer difficulties, and a story of late time would have betrayed itself by late ideas. A writer desirous of ascribing late laws to the Mosaic time would have been careful to show also the early observance of the laws; an Exilian writer could have no practical object to gain in devising laws which were fitted only for the desert life, and could by no possibility come into operation in post-Exilian times.

The close resemblance of such laws as those for priestly purification, the water of jealousy, and the red heifer, to Egyptian customs, and the prominence given to laws of leprosy, which an ancient Egyptian tradition makes a disease specially affecting the Israelites, all point to a time when contact with Egypt was recent; and the friendly attitude of Israel to Edom and Moab, as well as the knowledge of the true God ascribed to Balaam, are not what we should have expected from a late writer. But, indeed, it is misleading to speak of later tradition, when we find, as even advanced critics admit, that the earliest of the writing prophets have the same view of the early history of their people as is here presented. The tradition is one of the earliest and most deeply rooted that Israel possessed, so firmly embedded in their literature that, if we tear it out, we have nothing substantial left out of which to construct their early history. And though, from the brief and fragmentary manner in which the details of the desert life have come down to us, we may have difficulty in forming a clear and connected view of all the events, the mode in which the record is made, and the striking confirmations it receives from every side, leave no room to doubt that the story is true.

DEUTERONOMY.

1. *Name.*—The fifth book of the Pentateuch is, in the Hebrew Bible, designated by the expression "These are the words" . . . or simply "Words," taken, as in the case of the titles of the preceding books, from the opening sentence. The name by which the book is now commonly known had its origin in the Septuagint rendering of chapter xvii. 18, where it is ordained that the future king shall "write him a copy of this law in a book." The word translated in our version "Copy," *i.e. duplicate*, has, in the hands of the Greek translators, been combined with the word "law," so as to produce the expression which, in English guise, becomes *Deuteronomy, i.e.* Second or Repeated Law. The Jews also denote the book by the Hebrew phrase referred to, and, looking to the contents, understand the title in the sense of "Repetition of the Law."

In situation, Deuteronomy stands in close connection with the Book of Numbers. Although the narrative is not formally taken up, the preceding history is supposed throughout, and the scene is still in the plains of Moab. The amount of time covered by the book is not long. It opens with the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year of the Exodus (i. 3); and as we learn from Joshua iv. 19 that it was on the tenth day of the first month of the following year that the passage of the Jordan took place, and from Deuteronomy xxxiv. 8 that the mourning for Moses lasted thirty days, there remain only forty days for the addresses by Moses to have been delivered and the other events to have occurred in which he was concerned.

2. *Literary Features.*—The Book of Deuteronomy at the first glance presents features that strikingly distinguish it from the preceding books. Though it is the natural completion of the Book of Numbers, bringing down the history to the death of Moses and the point at which the Israelites were about to enter into their promised inheritance, and although it presents the same combination of narrative and legislation which

is observable in Exodus and Numbers, yet the whole tone of the book is in marked contrast with that of any other book of the Pentateuch. We miss the customary formula of Leviticus, "The Lord spake unto Moses"; for Moses here speaks directly to the people in his own name, or enunciates laws as having been given previously through his mediation. The striking feature is the hortatory tone which pervades the book.

Apart from the few historical notices at the conclusion, the whole book may be said to be made up of a series of addresses by the great Lawgiver, in which he reviews the past and gives counsel and warning for the future. We have, first of all, an introductory discourse (i.—iv. 40), in which God's goodness and care in the past are dwelt upon as motives for faithful obedience to His laws. Chapter iv. 44 seems to be the heading of what follows, a section forming the greater part of the book, and giving it the character which has been associated with the name of Deuteronomy, as usually understood, Repetition of the Law. The section extending to the end of chapter xxvi. consists of one unbroken address, delivered by Moses "unto all Israel" (v. 1). The first part of this address, ending with the eleventh chapter, contains a repetition of the Decalogue, with a recital of the circumstances under which the covenant was made at Horeb, and emphasises particularly the first two commandments, the duty of serving God alone and of abstaining from all forms of idolatrous worship. The second part of the address, beginning with chapter xii., lays down more specifically "the statutes and judgments" which were to be observed in the land about to be possessed. These relate to matters of religion and worship (xii. 1—xvi. 17), the appointment and duties of judges and officers, modes of procedure in civil and criminal cases, and suchlike (xvi. 18—xxi. 23), and matters of a social and individual character (xxii. 1—xxvi. 19).

A third discourse begins at chapter xxvii., where "Moses and the elders of Israel" command that the people, after crossing the Jordan, shall inscribe "all the words of this law" on plastered stones on Mount Ebal, and, after offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, shall solemnly bind themselves, by blessing and cursing, to its faithful observance. In chapter xxviii. Moses himself unfolds in detail what the nature of the blessing and the curse shall be; and from this to the end of chapter xxx. he again urges faithfulness to the covenant thus ratified, in order that the promised blessing may follow. The next chapter (xxxi.) contains the commission of Joshua to carry on the work begun by Moses, the delivery of the written law to the priests and elders, with the charge to read it publicly before the assembled

people once in seven years, and the command of God to Moses to deliver to the people, in the form of a song, a recital of all His deeds for them, that it may in generations to come be a witness against them. The song itself is given in chapter xxxii.; the following chapter has, also in poetical form, "the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death"; and the closing chapter, in brief but exalted style, tells how the great lawgiver, at God's command, went up "unto Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah," viewed the land on which he was not to set foot, and "died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord."

3. *The Situation.*—The hortatory character of Deuteronomy is in keeping with the situation in which the book presents Israel at this period. The wandering in the desert was at an end, the tribes were assembled in an orderly camp, and only the narrow stream of the Jordan separated them from the land which for generations they had been taught to regard as their inheritance. Everything depended on their fidelity to the God who had in covenant taken them for his peculiar people. Moses, recognising that he had only been the temporary minister of an abiding covenant, seeks to impress upon the people that the foundation of their existence as a nation lay in God's choice (vii. 7, 8; x. 15), and that the only hope of their achieving His purpose lay in their obedience to His law.

To impress the former point, he reviews at length the wonderful dealings of their God with them in the desert, and the earnest of the inheritance He had already given them in the partial possession on the east of the Jordan; and in doing so, he is not careful to state events in their strictly chronological order, but groups them as best to suit the purpose of his exhortation. In regard to the latter point he speaks as a prophet. As he is convinced of the unchanging purpose of God, so he knows how prone the people had been from the beginning to swerve from the path of obedience, and, with unerring intuition, warns them of the dangers to which they would be particularly liable. Like all succeeding prophets, he deals in broad and general terms when he refers to the actual occurrences of the future: speaks as if the crossing of the Jordan would be followed by a sudden and almost peaceable possession of Canaan, and alludes in the most general way to the place which should ultimately become the religious centre, and the mode of government which in course of time would be set up. But with him, as with all other prophets, the moral and religious issues of the future are certainties: he sets before the people life and death, blessing and cursing (xi. 26, 27; xxx. 15, 19), assuring them that by no possibility

would prosperity be theirs unless they obeyed the voice of the Lord their God.

This prophetic tone has been heard on former occasions when the covenant relation between God and Israel had to be enforced. At Sinai, in connection with the giving of the first tables of the law and the reading of the Book of the Covenant, Moses impressed upon Israel the same truths in similar words (Exodus xix. 4, 6; xxiii. 20, 33). At the second giving of the tables of the law, we find the same thing (Exodus xxxiv. 10, 16); and at the close of the legislation of Leviticus, there is a whole chapter (Leviticus xxvi.) which anticipates what is more fully expressed in the twenty-eighth chapter of this book. The tone of warning thus swells louder and louder, and reaches its height when the covenant is ratified for the last time before the crossing of the Jordan. For on every high hill and in every shady grove of Canaan, the rights of an impure heathen worship were celebrated; and we need not wonder that Moses reiterates the words "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God" (xii. 4; xviii. 14), and puts in the forefront of his address the two first commandments of the Decalogue; for he knew, and the succeeding history too plainly proved, that the seductions of the heathen worship were more formidable obstacles to the full occupation of the land than all the armed resistance of its inhabitants.

4. *Character of the Legislation.*—The situation of the people, on the eve of crossing the Jordan, also furnishes an explanation of the form in which the legislation of Deuteronomy is cast. That there should have been a repetition of the law along with the renewal of the covenant is in keeping with former experience, as the instances just mentioned prove. It was the more necessary on this occasion, seeing that the tribes had been for many years leading a nomadic life, and many of the observances of the law were neglected or held in abeyance.* Yet there is manifestly a special purpose in view in this case, which controls the form which the laws assume. The present position of the people and their prospects in the immediate future are the main objects of regard; and whatsoever would tend to bind them more closely together, and to preserve them faithful to God and pure from heathen contamination, is emphasised. It is "all Israel" that is addressed, the laws are such as concern the whole people, not special classes, and such as bear upon the development of the national life in a settled condition.

The legislation of Deuteronomy is not by any means a simple repetition of that of the preceding books, for the situation and

* See chap. xii. 8, and compare Numbers, § 6, pp. 46, 47.

purpose are different. Laws that had special reference to the life of the desert find no place; and on certain subjects the legislation of Deuteronomy is at variance with that of the Levitical code. For example, in Leviticus xvii. 15 it is prescribed that whoever ate of what died of itself should be unclean until the evening; but in Deuteronomy xiv. 21 such food is altogether forbidden to the Israelites: the law in the former case being more lax, doubtless because, in the desert, animal food was a greater rarity. In the same way, in Leviticus xvii. 2, it is ordained that all animals to be used for food should be slaughtered at the door of the Tabernacle, an ordinance practicable in the desert where, as among the modern Arabs, animal food is rarely eaten, not to mention the special reason given in the seventh verse; but in Deuteronomy xii. 15 animals used for food may be killed and eaten in any place, a liberty rendered necessary by the circumstances of settled life in Canaan.

Again, there is a conspicuous absence of laws of a ritual and ceremonial kind, which bulk so largely in Leviticus; for such laws would be under the special charge of the priestly class, and the acquaintance of the people with them was a matter of secondary importance. Whereas in Leviticus the "sons of Aaron" are distinguished from the general body of the Levites, and the functions of the priests and of the different families of the Levites are minutely specified, the Book of Deuteronomy uses the comprehensive expression "the priests the Levites," and scarcely refers to any distinction of privilege or function.* It is only in incidental notices that the distinction comes out (x. 6, xviii. 1, xxxiii. 8); yet, though such distinctions are left to the custody of the Levitical classes themselves, the due of the priests *from the people* is particularly mentioned (xviii. 3), and, in keeping with the whole situation of the book, the tribe of Levi, which was to have no territorial inheritance, is repeatedly commended to the generosity of the other tribes.

The presence of laws relating to clean and unclean foods, the marriage relation and personal purity, such as bulk largely in Leviticus, and of other laws relating to judges, officers, and legal processes, which are scarcely found in that book, is ac-

* In the earlier stage of criticism, when Leviticus was believed to be older than Deuteronomy, the identification of priests and Levites in the latter book was supposed to indicate a gradual elevation of the status of the Levite; according to the nearer view, which regards Deuteronomy as the earlier book, the pre-eminence of the sons of Aaron in Leviticus denotes the gradual growth of a hierarchical tendency and the elevation of a distinctly priestly family. The view rests mainly on an intricate and very precarious interpretation of a passage in Ezekiel (chap. xliv.), upon which we cannot here enter.

counted for by the one controlling purpose, to secure that Israel should be kept clear of heathen contamination and be prepared for the duties of a settled life in the land of their inheritance. And, finally, as the preservation of the unity of religion would depend much on the uniform observance of its great ceremonies, the necessity of a central sanctuary, which had been met by the existence of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, is insisted on with an emphasis which forms a leading characteristic of the book.

5. *Relation to other books of the Pentateuch.*—The considerations that have just been put forward explain to a great extent why it is that the Book of Deuteronomy, as a whole, is in its literary aspects so different from the other books of the Pentateuch. It remains to be added that a close examination of the book shows that it was not intended to be a work complete in itself, and that it is not intelligible apart from those that precede it. Not merely does it, by its introduction and conclusion, fit into the historical outline of the whole Pentateuch; but there are, in the body of the book itself, features both of the narrative and of the legislation which rest upon the history and legislation that precede it.

For example, we find in chapter xxiv. 8, "Take heed in the plague of leprosy that thou observe diligently to do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you; as I commanded them, so shall ye observe to do." As the prescriptions referred to, which necessarily would be of an intricate description, are not found in Deuteronomy itself, we are bound to assume that the reference is to such detailed laws as are laid down in Leviticus xiii., xiv. In the same way, in Deuteronomy xviii. 2, it is said of the tribe of Levi, "They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as He hath said unto them," where the reference must be to such passages as Numbers xviii. 20, 23.

Even more striking are the incidental allusions. The making of the ark is only alluded to in a brief phrase (x. 1), and the first mention of the Tabernacle of the congregation—and it is merely a mention—occurs in xxxi. 14. Such allusions do more than vouch for the mere existence of the ark and the Tabernacle: they rest upon, and are unintelligible apart from, a ritual and worship of which these were prominent features. So again, when it is said (xxiv. 9), "Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam, by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt," the whole story of Miriam's leprosy, as told in Numbers xii., is suggested; and indeed the manner in which the events of the Exodus and the wilderness journeyings are touched upon throughout

the book, implies that the whole narrative of the preceding books is well known.

6. *Critical Views.*—Nevertheless, the newer school of criticism holds it as proved that the legislation of Deuteronomy is earlier than that of Leviticus, and that the book itself was "composed in the same age as that in which it was discovered, and that it was made the rule of Josiah's reformation, which took place about a generation before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans" (2 Kings xxii.).* It is maintained that the only authoritative code of law up to this time was the brief Book of the Covenant (Exodus xx. 23—xxiii.), that the Deuteronomic code was drawn up and ascribed to Moses, in the interest of the centralisation of worship, and did actually bring about the reform of that king's reign. But, however positively it may be asserted, there is absolutely no proof that the Book of Deuteronomy *alone* is referred to as "the Book of the Law," or "Book of the Covenant" (2 Kings xxii. 8; xxiii. 2), that was found in the Temple.

Suppose for a moment that we admit that this book was written for the purpose of authorising a central sanctuary, the question arises, What was the use of authorising a sanctuary whose ritual and service are not prescribed? It is impossible from the Book of Deuteronomy, still less possible from the Book of the Covenant, to construct a manual of laws for the Temple service; and yet the Temple service could not have been maintained up to the time of Josiah without an orderly and detailed ritual. If the existing ritual was accepted as authoritative, then there was some law, such as that of Leviticus, written or unwritten, to sanction it: if it was the mere growth of usage, it is incredible that Mosaic sanction should not have been sought for it as well as for central worship: and if, as is certain, the ritual had been overlaid with corruptions, there was the more reason why its pure forms should be laid down. We are thus driven, by every consideration, to assume that *some* Levitical code was accepted as authoritative, and no other is known to have existed than the code of Leviticus. But, had the main purpose of the book been to give authority to a central sanctuary, what stronger motive could have been urged than the presence of the ark in the Temple, not to speak of the Tabernacle in the wilderness? Yet this argument is not employed, although as we have seen the writer knew of both the ark and the Tabernacle.

For the late date of the book much reliance is placed on the Law of the Kingdom (xvii. 14—20), which it is maintained could

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 10, pp. 11, 12.

only have been framed after Solomon and other kings had given examples of the luxury therein animadverted upon. But, apart from all prophetic foresight, which the most modern critics refuse to admit, it was surely the most natural thing for Moses, acquainted with the kingly government as it prevailed among all surrounding nations but his own, to foresee and provide for the eventuality supposed. If the abuses against which he uttered his warning were exactly those which occurred, they had already been seen in other nations, and were exactly those that might have been expected: and it is remarkable that one danger mentioned, from which other nations had suffered, that of being ruled over by a king of foreign blood, never emerged, so far as we are aware, in the actual history of Israel.

Again, if the book was composed at a late date and mainly under prophetic influence, it is very remarkable that the prophetic order should be referred to in so vague a manner as it seems to be in xviii. 15—22, and still more so that there is nowhere to be found a hint of the antagonism between the prophetic and priestly classes, of which the critics make so much, and which had certainly shown itself long before the time of Josiah. And yet, according to the critical view, the reformation of Josiah's time was one that was very disadvantageous to the priestly class. That Hilkiah the high priest co-operated in the reform is a good proof that he regarded the "Book of the Law" as having a higher authority than that of the prophetic order; and the entire harmony of priestly and prophetic tendencies in this book indicates an early time when the harmony was unbroken.

7. *Retrospect.*—On looking back from the point at which the Pentateuch closes, we can see that not one of the five books of which it is composed is complete in itself and devoid of reference to the others. The story is taken up by one where it is dropped by the preceding; and the legislation also, however fragmentary in the way in which it is presented, shows a connection and a progress. It may be admitted that the component parts of the books belong to different periods, the death of Moses, for example, being recorded side by side with words spoken and written by Moses. It may be admitted that we have three stages of legislation, as represented in the Book of the Covenant, the Levitical code, and Deuteronomy; it may be admitted that there are variations in the laws and an advance from a lower to a higher stage; but all this does not necessitate the assumption that these codes are separated by intervals of centuries. From the time when the short code of the Covenant was given at Sinai till the time when Israel was ready to cross the Jordan,

many changes, internal and external, had taken place.* Laws suited to the desert would be unsuited to settled life, and laws given in prospect of the life in Canaan might from various causes fall into disuse or be held in abeyance. The modification in the age of Levitical service found in the compass of one book † shows how regulations of this kind are subject to change. It is always so with matters of ritual; and it is quite possible that Levitical laws, under the special custody of the priests, might be retouched from time to time as usage varied, and yet be essentially Mosaic.

All this and much more may be admitted; but all who would give the Biblical writers credit for ordinary honesty will hesitate before admitting that we owe a great part of the Pentateuch to literary fiction. When it is gravely asserted that prophets and the best spirits of the nation framed first one code, and then another, with the deliberate intention to represent the history of the past as something different from what it actually was, when the co-called historical books are said to have been written to support an unhistorical view, and when even the writings of contemporary prophets have to be expurgated before they can be used as evidence, one may despair of arriving at the truth altogether, or at once set about constructing the history without the aid of these books. And when we remember, on the one hand, that such prophets as Jeremiah, who is believed to have had an active share in the production of Deuteronomy, were in the habit of enforcing their words by no authority of Moses, but by a peremptory "Thus saith the Lord"; and on the other hand, that very little is left, on this theory, of Mosaic work to appeal to, it appears more and more evident that the only use of the hypothesis of literary fiction is to afford critics a way of escape from an untenable position.

* Wellhausen has to assume that in fifty years of the Exile a people who had been hopelessly wedded to the worship of the high places was effectually and for ever cured of this tendency. If so much could happen in those fifty years, why should the forty years between Egypt and Canaan be a fixed point?

† Numbers iv. 3, viii. 24. Compare also 1 Chron. xxiii. 3, 27; 2 Chron. xxxi. 17.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

1. *Its Place in the Canon.*—The books which now bear the names of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are in the Hebrew Bible classed together under the general name of the *Former Prophets.* They are called *prophets*, not because they are regarded as prophetical books in the usual sense, but because they were believed to have been composed by prophetic men, and the qualification *former* refers simply to the fact that they precede, in the order of the canon, the prophetic writings, strictly so called, which are named the *Latter Prophets.*

The names of the individual parts of this series, it will at once be apparent, indicate the subjects, not the authors, of the compositions, and the division of the whole into separate books has varied, as will be explained when we reach the Books of Samuel and Kings. These books are all of anonymous authorship, and we are left to determine, as far as possible, by a critical examination of the compositions themselves, out of what materials they were composed, and how and at what period they attained their present forms. This circumstance, however, so far from detracting from the credibility of the books, in reality enhances their value in this respect. The writing down of such historical records as these books contain must have been the work, not of private individuals, but of persons possessing the acquirement, rare in early times, of letters, and occupying some official standing among their people; and the more ancient these writers, the more prominent would be their position.

It is expressly stated that Moses wrote down such accounts of events of his time, and wrote them in an authoritative manner for national preservation.* The same thing is said of Joshua;† and it is natural to suppose that those who continued their literary work would be men of recognised standing. Writings

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 5, pp. 5, 6.

† Joshua xxiv. 26.

put forth by such men, relating the history of a people whose national consciousness was so strong, must have had a kind of official recognition, and are thus vouched for, so to speak, not merely by an individual author, but by the whole nation. Like the Gospel narratives in the early Church, they set forth "the things most surely believed among" the people of Israel, and so they were handed on without question, accepted as in the highest sense the national literature, and included, as a matter of course, in the canon of sacred books.

2. *Name and Divisions.*—The Book of Joshua is so named from the personage who figures most prominently in its pages. Joshua, the son of Nun, had been the servant and intimate companion of Moses in the desert, and had, towards the close of Moses' life (Deut. xxxi.), been solemnly set apart as his successor. The work to which he was specially called was the leadership of the armed host in the conquest of the promised land, for which he had early shown a special fitness by his aptitude for military affairs (Exod. xvii. 8—16). But, in general, he had to carry on the work of Moses, to be, as the lawgiver himself expressed it, "a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and may bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Num. xxvii. 16, 17). The book which shows how this was accomplished appropriately bears his name; and, as the books called the books of Moses ends with the death of the lawgiver, the Book of Joshua ends with the death of the military leader.

It falls naturally into three parts; the first, embracing chapters i. to xii., narrating the conquest of Canaan; the second, extending from chapters xiii. to xxiii., describing the partition of the land among the several tribes; while the third (xxiii., xxiv.) forms a conclusion to the whole, and is mainly of a hortatory character. The principal events of the conquest which are here related are these. Joshua, encouraged by a special revelation, orders the tribes to prepare for the crossing of the Jordan (chap. i.), and sends two spies, who find a lodging in Rahab's house and return with a hopeful report (ii.). The people march from Shittim, where they had been encamped (Num. xxv. 1), to the banks of the Jordan, and after three days make the miraculous passage of the river (iii., iv.); after which they celebrate their entrance into Canaan by the performance of the rite of circumcision and the observance of the Passover (v. 1—12). The walled city of Jericho is taken (v. 13—vi. 27), Ai is attacked, and, after the detection and punishment of Achan's sin, is taken (vii.—viii. 29). The covenant is confirmed at Ebal and Gerizim

(viii. 30—35). The Gibeonites by craft procure a treaty of peace with Israel (ix.); and the league of the Southern Kings is broken by the great battle of Beth-horon (x.). With the defeat of a similar confederacy of forces in the north in a battle near the waters of Merom (xi.), the conquest of the whole country is practically secured, a list of the conquered kings being given in chapter xii.

In the second part of the book, after a general statement of the boundaries of the land to be divided (xiii. 1—7), and an indication of the limits of the territory which had already been allotted to the two tribes and a-half on the east of Jordan (xiii. 8—33), Joshua and Eleazar, having first assigned Hebron to Caleb (xiv. 6—15), proceed to divide the western territory, giving portions, first of all, to Judah, Ephraim, and half of Manasseh (xv.—xvii.), and then, after the setting up of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, to the remaining tribes except Levi (xviii.—xix. 48), a special inheritance being set apart to Joshua himself (xix. 49—51). The cities of refuge and the Levitical cities are designated (xx.—xxi.), and the two tribes and a-half are sent home to their own territory with an injunction to maintain faithfully the national religion (xxii.).

In the concluding part of the book Joshua solemnly addresses the people, warning them against the idolatry of the neighbouring nations, calls them to Shechem, where the bones of Joseph had been laid, and there renews the covenant, incorporating a record of the transactions in the Book of the Law, and setting up a commemorative stone under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord (xxiii., xxiv. 28). The book closes with a brief account of the death and burial of Joshua and of Eleazar (xxiv. 29—33).

3. *Literary Features.*—In style as well as in contents the different parts of the book have their individual peculiarities. The first part is historical, both in form and substance; the second, while historical in style, is in contents chiefly topographical. It may be said to be also legislative, for the partition of territory is carried out in an official manner, Joshua, the successor of Moses, and Eleazar, the successor of Aaron, representing the prophetic and priestly authority, and the sacred lot giving Divine sanction to their proceedings. The concluding portion is in the hortatory style of Deuteronomy.

Certain variations in language also have been observed in these different portions. The original word for "tribe" employed in the chapters relating to the conquest is different from that used in those relating to the partition of the land. In the earlier part, and also in the concluding section, the officials associated

with Joshua are usually designated *elders, heads,* or *officers,** whereas, in the middle part, they are styled *heads of the fathers.*† Now, it has been observed that these peculiarities correspond with usages found in the Pentateuch. In portions which are known as Jehovistic (*e.g.* Exod. v. 14, 15, 19; Num. xi. 16), as also in Deuteronomy, the "officers" are frequently mentioned, and "elders" occur less frequently than in the Elohistic sections, in which "the heads of the fathers" are also characteristic (Exod. vi. 14, 25; Num. vii. 2, xxxii. 28, xxxvi. 1). Again, Eleazar, who in the second portion of this book is associated with Joshua in the partition of the land, is not mentioned at all in the earlier portion, not even where the priests appear, and it is maintained that all the places in the Pentateuch where he is mentioned are Elohistic.

For such reasons modern critics have concluded that the Book of Joshua is of the same composite character as the Pentateuch, and assume that, in its original form, it was closely joined to the preceding work, the whole forming a connected history ending with the conquest: and so they are in the habit of speaking of the *Hexateuch,* or book of six portions, as distinguished from the present Pentateuch.‡ The Book of Joshua, however, in its present form, has features that show that it was intended to be complete in itself; and the fact that the Samaritans have substantially the Pentateuch as it exists in the Hebrew, but a work widely divergent from the Book of Joshua, is proof that, if the two were once connected, the separation must have taken place before they assumed their present form. The references to the "Book of the Law of Moses" (i. 8, viii. 34, 35, xxiv. 26) presupposes the existence in a formal and independent shape of something corresponding to the legislative part of the Pentateuch. The ending of the book with the death of Joshua and Eleazar, just as the Pentateuch ends with the death of Moses, shows that the writer wished to make his work a completed composition. Certain peculiarities also in the spelling of proper names betray a different hand from that employed on the Pentateuch; and the division of the eastern territory and the designation of the cities of refuge, which form part of the subject of the Pentateuch, are here treated at length anew, as if the author wished to give completeness and independence to his work.

* See i. 10, iii. 2, vii. 6, viii. 10, 33, xxiii. 2, xxiv. 1, in some of which it will be observed *judges* also occur. In ix. 15, 18, 19, 21, we have "*princes* (or chiefs) of the congregation."

† See xiv. 1, xix. 51, xxi. 1, xxii. 14, 21, 30, and note the variation, "heads of the thousands." In xvii. 4 we have also "princes."

‡ See Introduction to the Pentateuch, §§ 1, 8, 9, pp. 1, 9, 10.

4. *Period covered by the Book.*—The book contains but a brief and summary account of the events which happened during the period to which it relates. The duration of Joshua's rule has been variously estimated; probably it may be stated as lasting about twenty-five years. It is said towards the close of the account of the conquest (xi. 18) that "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings;" and when Caleb, at the partition of territory, claimed a special inheritance, he said it was five and forty years since Moses had made such a promise to him (xiv. 10), referring to the time when the spies returned to Kadesh, before the beginning of the wandering of thirty-eight years. Thus seven years at least are to be assigned to the conquest; and when Joshua summons the people together at the close of the book (xxiii. 1) he is "an old man, well stricken in years," and "many days" have passed since "the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about." Yet the events which must have filled up this long time are only stated in a summary manner.

We have, in the history of the conquest, only the details of a few great battles which were decisive of the contest; we have also indications of the boundaries of the tribes and lists of the towns lying within them; but as to the manner in which the people as a whole settled down in the new circumstances in which they were placed, and the extent to which they took actual possession of the land assigned to them, we have only the most general hints. In a war of occupation in a country like Palestine the foe is not finally broken in a few encounters. Though the invaders secure a footing, the original inhabitants only retire to advance again, or keep up a desultory warfare "for a long time," molesting the invaders, or taking advantage of their movements to regain lost ground. Thus places that fell at the first shock are found raising their heads again when the clash of arms is past, and towns are taken and retaken before the struggle is conclusively decided. Hebron and Debir, for example, are mentioned as taken by Joshua in the southern campaign (x. 36—39, xi. 21), yet require to be subdued by Caleb (xiv. 12—14, xv. 13—19); and Gezer, smitten by Joshua (x. 33, xii. 12), had to be cleared by the children of Joseph (xvi. 10).

It is most remarkable that we have no account at all of the conquest of the largest part of the country, the great backbone of the land falling principally to the lot of Ephraim. While there is a great battle fought in the south, and a similar decisive battle in the north, the intervening territory is not mentioned, except briefly in one verse (xi. 16), although it must have been firmly taken possession of, and that after no little effort, as the

remarkable passage xvii. 14—18 shows. Moreover, in the list of conquered kings given in xii. 9—24, while there is a full enumeration of places in the south and north that had been subdued, there is an almost total absence of names of places falling within the great central district. The account given in viii. 30—35 of the confirming of the covenant at Shechem seems strangely out of place immediately after the capture of Ai, and before any word has been said of the subjugation of the territory in which Shechem lay. If it is not placed where it stands by anticipation, this may imply other military operations in the heart of the country of which we have no record. At all events, the striking omission of details regarding this territory, to whatever cause it is due, emphasises the fact that a great deal must have happened during these years which can only be inferred from the brief accounts given in the book, and reminds us that the conquest and occupation of Canaan must have been a slower and more arduous work than a cursory reading might lead us to suppose.

5. *The Conquest.*—The purpose of the book being evidently to give an account of the manner in which Canaan was subdued, and its territory apportioned among the tribes, the details, though few, are so presented as to show the wisdom with which both were effected. We can see the advantage of the Israelites not having been allowed to enter the land from the south, where height after height would have had to be taken, and a stronger resistance encountered at every step. Entering from the east, and securing a firm base at Gilgal by the destruction of the neighbouring strong town of Jericho, they were able to penetrate the country by the pass leading up to Ai, to strike right and left in the very heart of the country, and, after the great battle, to pursue the fleeing foe down the pass of Beth-horon. These two passes, opening up from the east and west on the mountainous inland ridge, enabled them to keep up communication with their base at Gilgal, and to carry out the subjugation of the southern part of the country. That this was effectually done we gather from the brief summary of chapter x. 40—43, where the Revised Version gives a more precise rendering of the fortieth verse:—"So Joshua smote all the land, the hill country and the south [the Negeb], and the lowland [the Shephelah], and the slopes and all their kings." And it was probably so far concluded before the great battle in the north was fought; for it was the rumour of Joshua's victories that roused Jabin and his confederates to combine to oppose him, and though Joshua's movement against them was sudden he must have felt secure from the southern side before venturing so far north.

Again, the chapters which describe the territories of the tribes

are, from an antiquarian and topographical point of view, exceedingly interesting, and have been called by Dean Stanley the Domesday Book of the conquest of Canaan. The boundaries seem to have been drawn with the greatest care, and in the case of seven tribes at least it is expressly said that this was done after an actual survey and from written notes (xviii. 4—9). Recent examinations by the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund have shown that the boundaries of the various tribes were "almost entirely natural—rivers, ravines, ridges, and the watershed lines of the country." They have also discovered that the names of towns situated in the various tribes are not put down at haphazard, but "follow an order roughly consecutive, and all those of one district are mentioned together." This fact, indeed, has enabled the explorers in some cases to effect their identifications.

It is also pointed out that the territories of individual tribes in many cases constitute distinct districts of the country. "Issachar had the great plain, Zebulon the low hills north of it. The sons of Joseph held the wild central mountains, and Naphtali those of Upper Galilee. Dan and Asher occupied the rich Shephelah (or lowland) and maritime plain. Simeon inhabited the desert, while Judah, holding the largest share of territory, had both mountain and Shephelah, plain and desert in its portion." And, once more, "the proportion of territory to population is calculated to vary exactly in accordance with the fertility of the district. Taking as a basis the tribe populations (Num. xxvi.), it appears that the ancient populations must have been most dense exactly in those districts in which the greatest number of ancient ruins is now found, and which are still most thickly inhabited."*

6. *Plan and connection with other books.*—All these things, however, are set down by the sacred writer, not for the purpose of satisfying antiquarian curiosity, but, in accordance with the plan underlying all these books, to show that the promise of God to the fathers of Israel had been fulfilled. At the close of the record of the conquest it is said: "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses" (xi. 23); and after the last division of territory the same thought finds expression at greater length: "The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers. . . . There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to Israel; all came to pass" (xxi. 43—45). In this

* "Twenty-one Years' Work in the Holy Land," page 110. Palestine Exploration Fund, 1886.

way the book of Joshua connects itself in plan and contents with the antecedent Pentateuch.

We shall also see that it is connected on the other side with the succeeding Book of Judges, and thus forms a link in the chain of history which it is the object of the sacred writers to unfold. In one aspect it may be regarded as the conclusion of one stage of history, for it represents the fulfilment of the promise; in another aspect it is the beginning of a new period, for Israel now passes into settled life, and has new problems to solve, new difficulties to face. But, from whatever side the sacred writers view the history, they assume that Israel has a special calling, and is under a special Divine protection and guidance. And, indeed, it is impossible to account for their conquest of Canaan without assuming the help of God and their conviction of His help. The Canaanites were far their superiors in the civilisation of the time; and, although their vices had enervated them and their divisions made them an easier prey to the invaders, they were still able to offer a stout resistance and to continue to give trouble to their vanquishers.

The idea of some writers of recent times that the various tribes passed over from the east of the Jordan into Canaan at different times and secured possession by their independent efforts, or even peaceably by purchase or alliance with the native races, is clearly not the idea of the sacred writers, and is entirely inadequate to explain either the accounts or the events. There can be no question that it was one of the earliest and most deeply rooted beliefs of the Israelites that they had obtained possession of Canaan in an extraordinary way and by the special help of their God; it is equally clear that they obtained such a decided mastery over the native races that the language and laws and religion of the conquerors took the place of those of the conquered.

But to assume that such a belief, which was the mainspring of all the national greatness of Israel, rested on nothing more than the wanderings of tribes into Canaan and gradual intermixture and incorporation with the inhabitants, and that such a mastery was gained by a race that not only borrowed the culture but even adopted the religious usages of the people among whom they settled, is to accept miracles greater than those which it is proposed to set aside. To whatever depths Israel afterwards fell, it is clear that, in order to gain possession of Canaan, they must have had to fight hard, and that till their supremacy was secured they must have remained united in national life and in religion or they would have been absorbed. Only the consciousness of a high destiny, and the conviction that

they were one united people under Divine guidance, such as this book ascribes to them, could have given them courage to achieve what they did; and nothing less than the memory of great events can explain the early national belief of a history such as is here recorded.

7. *Parallels in History.*—The conquest of Canaan by the Israelites has its parallels to some extent in general history. The barbarous Germanic tribes broke down the superior culture of the Roman Empire, and the rude Mohammedans of the desert overran the empires of the East. It is the law of God's providence that luxury brings decay, and that nations whose moral life is corrupted deteriorate in physical courage and political strength. Regarded from this point of view the victory of the Israelites was inevitable. Trained in the scanty life of the desert, debarred from returning to Egypt, and pressed forward by their growing needs, they penetrated the fertile land of Canaan and supplanted the effete civilisation of its inhabitants with their own more healthy life. That in the process of subjugation there were severe struggles and much blood shed is no more than has happened in the similar cases alluded to; and it is captious to object to things occurring in sacred history which are matters of course in the general history of the world.

There are, however, certain things which distinguish the wars of Israel from other wars of conquest: they were fighting for a land which was hallowed by the sepulchres of their fathers, and had been given them by Divine promise; the consciousness that they were engaged in a holy war saved them from the brutalising effects of bloodshed and the debasing effects of plunder; above all, they were the bearers of a religion which was to be a blessing to all the earth, and their occupation of Canaan was necessary in the fulfilment of their destiny till "the fulness of the time" should come. "The Israelites' sword," says Dr. Arnold, "in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. In these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind; it might be that they were tempted by their very distinctness to despise other nations. Still they did God's work; still they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it."

THE BOOKS OF JUDGES AND RUTH.

1. *The Names.*—The Book of Judges is so named from the series of distinguished leaders who appeared in Israel from time to time between Joshua and Samuel, and whose deeds form the principal subject of the book. The name given to these leaders is not to be taken to imply that the primary office of the judges was the exercise of judicial functions. The word "judge" in the Old Testament has the usual sense (as may be seen in Psalm xliii. 1, compared with Exod. ii. 14) of maintaining the cause, or asserting the right, of any one; and the history shows that the judges were raised up, when Israel was in straits, to maintain the cause of God's people against hostile nations, and to assert the principles on which the Hebrew nation was founded. Hence they are called *saviours* (chap. iii. 9; compare ii. 16).

Judicial functions are not, however, excluded; for, in a state of society such as that depicted in this book, the leader who comes to the front in a time of public necessity is invested with wide powers, and held in general regard. And thus, when Moses and Joshua, who had held office for life, had passed away, and a permanent head like a king had not yet been appointed, the military leader for the time would naturally wield also an authority in civil matters. What is particularly mentioned of Deborah (iv. 5), that "the children of Israel came up to her for judgment," was doubtless true of others; and Samuel, who may be taken as the last of the line, representing the transition to the monarchical rule, not only himself exercised such functions, but appointed his sons also as judges (1 Sam. viii. 1). The office was not hereditary, the judge being raised up at the time and in the place of special need: it was thus in keeping with the condition of the period, which was one of transition from the rule of Moses and Joshua, who governed by direct instructions from

God, to that of the kings, who had a settled organization for civil and military affairs. The book also, in its literary form, reflects this character of transition, consisting, for the most part, not of a continuous narration, but of a series of sketches or pictures, strikingly different in their details, of the life of the time, and of the deeds of the leaders who, under Divine guidance, influenced the course of events through which Israel settled down to permanent occupation of the promised land.

The little Book of Ruth, so named from the principal personage whose fortunes it relates, though an independent composition, and doubtless written at a different time, connects itself in its subject with the Book of Judges; for the events it records are stated to have occurred "in the days when the judges judged" (Ruth i. 1). Accordingly, it stands in the ancient versions, as in our English Bible, between the Books of Judges and Samuel, although in the Hebrew Bible it has a different place. Some have even supposed that it once formed part of the Book of Judges.

2. *Contents.*—In the series of historical books of the Old Testament the Book of Judges forms an orderly and connected link, following up the story of the conquest contained in the Book of Joshua, and preparing for the opening of the Books of Samuel which exhibit the rise of the kingly power. It falls naturally into three divisions: an introductory portion extending to chap. iii. 6; the main body of the book, embracing chaps. iii. 7, to xvi.; and an appendix in chaps. xvii.—xxi.

The introductory portion is twofold, retrospective and prospective. In chap. i. 1 to ii. 5, there is a condensed description of the extent to which the land had been, "after the death of Joshua," subdued by Israel. It mentions particularly the cities and districts which were left in the hands of the Canaanites, and concludes with a special revelation, threatening Israel with heavy trials if they did not take energetic measures for the possession of their territory. Then, in ii. 6—iii. 6, is given, prospectively, a summary view of the whole period of the judges which is to be described in the succeeding chapters.

After this introductory matter comes the main part of the book (iii. 7—xvi. 31). There are, in all, twelve persons mentioned who performed the function of judge, reckoning Deborah and Barak as one, and excluding Abimelech, who is regarded as a usurper. Of six of these the exploits are related at varying lengths; of the other six we have little more than a bare mention. The six who are treated in detail are: Othniel, son of Kenaz, who delivered Israel from the oppression of Cushan-Rishathayim, of Mesopotamia (iii. 7—11); Ehud, the Benjamite,

who appeared during the subjugation of Israel by Moab, with Ammon and Amalek, and achieved deliverance by slaying the Moabite king, Eglon (iii. 12—30); Deborah of Ephraim and Barak of Naphtali, who defeated Sisera, the general of Jabin, king of the Canaanites, at the battle of Tabor (iv., v.); Gideon of Manasseh, who repelled the invasion of the Midianites and "the Children of the East" (vi. 1—viii. 32), but by his imprudent assumption of a show of permanent authority gave occasion to the ambition of his son Abimelech, whose upstart reign is the subject of viii. 33—ix. 57; Jephthah of Gilead, who was called by his countrymen to act as leader against the Ammonites (x. 6—xii. 7); and Samson, the Danite, who "began to deliver" Israel from the oppression of the Philistines (xiii.—xvi.). The six who are but briefly mentioned are: Shamgar, who performed an exploit against the Philistines (iii. 31), Tola of Issachar (x. 1, 2), Jair of Gilead (x. 3—5), Ibzan of Bethlehem (xii. 8—10), Elon of Zebulon (xii. 11, 12), and Abdon of Pirathon (xii. 13—15), in regard to whom we are told only the period over which their rule extended, and some details as to their families and social position.

The appendix contains two episodes belonging to the time of the judges, viz., the story of the image-worship of Micah the Ephraimite, in its connection with the settling of the Danites in the north of the land (xvii.—xviii.); and the account of the outrage committed at Gibeah, which led to the war of extermination waged against Benjamin by the other tribes (xix.—xxi.).

The Book of Ruth, so far as the subject is concerned, may be regarded as another appendix, relating the episode of the young Moabitish widow, who became a mother in Israel and an ancestress of the royal house of David. Though the duration of the various oppressions and the time of the rule of the judges, and of the "rest" which the land enjoyed after each deliverance, are carefully given in most instances, it is impossible from these numbers to construct a system of chronology for the period of the Judges which would harmonize with other fixed dates in the history. From the frequent recurrence of the number forty, it would seem probable that the whole period of four hundred and eighty years, which, according to 1 Kings vi. 1, elapsed between the Exodus and the commencement of the building of the Temple, was divided by the Biblical writers into twelve round periods of forty years. But, seeing that a simple addition of the numbers mentioned in this Book of Judges would make the period far too extensive, it is most probable that there was an overlapping of several of the periods mentioned; and the probability is all the stronger when we regard the fact that the judges appeared in

places remote from one another in connection with oppressions that were more or less limited in their range.

3. *Characteristics.*—The several divisions of the Book of Judges which have just been enumerated have their different characteristics. The second portion of the introduction attaches itself closely to the main part of the book which immediately follows it. The conception of both is that, during the period of the Judges, the history of Israel repeats itself in ever recurring cycles. This conception is clearly enunciated in the preface (ii. 11—18) as the principle on which the succeeding history is to be treated, and finds expression in certain stereotyped phrases which occur at intervals throughout the book: "The children of Israel again did evil in the eyes of the Lord;" . . . "The Lord sold them into the hand of" the oppressor for the time, whom "they served" for so many years; . . . "The Lord raised up a deliverer" in the person of the judge whose deeds are then recorded . . . this deliverer judged Israel so long, and finally, "the land had rest" for a certain round number of years. This portion is apparently designed to be the sequel to the book of Joshua, for the introduction takes up the narrative at the point where it had been dropped in that book, and repeats the very words with which it closes.* It is thus written to give an account of the condition of Israel in the period when Joshua and all his contemporaries had passed away; and, coming down as it does to the oppression by the Philistines in the time of Samson, it carries us into the period taken up in the First Book of Samuel, at the opening of which the Philistines are seen holding a firm grasp of Israel in the south.†

The former part of the introduction, on the other hand, connects itself most naturally with the first part of the Book of Joshua, giving a picture of the state of the country immediately after the war of conquest, or, at all events, soon after Joshua's death. Here also we find the very words of the preceding book repeated in reference to the subjugation of certain places,‡ the object being evidently to show how imperfectly Israel had fulfilled its duty, as is seen more distinctly in the threatening uttered by the angel of the Lord, with which this part of the introduction closes (ii. 1—5).

The appended narratives, again, at the close of the book (xvii. —xxi.) connect themselves in time with this part of the introduction, falling, as they do, shortly after the time of Joshua, when the grandsons of Moses and Aaron were still alive. In

* Compare Judges ii. 6—10, with Josh. xxiv. 28—31.

† Compare Judges xiii. 1, 5, with 1 Sam. vii. 13.

‡ Compare, for example, Judges i. 11—15, with Josh. xv. 15—19.

chap. xviii. 30, in reference to the idol-worship set up at Dan, it is said that "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses,* he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land;" and in chap. xx. 27, 28, we read that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was alive and ministering before the ark at the time of the war with Benjamin.

The time to which the Book of Ruth relates is indicated in the genealogy at the close (Ruth iii. 18—22), which shows that Boaz, the husband of Ruth, was the grandfather of Jesse, the father of David.

4. *Composition.*—These different materials have the appearance of having come from different hands, but we have only the most general indications of the sources from which they are derived, and the periods at which they were composed. From the recurring statement in the closing chapters (xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 25), "In those days there was no king in Israel," we may gather that these portions, and the related introduction, which regards the period of the Judges as a completed whole, were written in the time of the monarchy, by one who wished to magnify the kingly office, or, at least, that they come from a writer who wished to show the superiority of the regal period over a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The Book of Ruth also, which begins by referring to "the days when the judges ruled" (Ruth i. 1) and ends by showing the genealogy of David (Ruth iv. 22), evidently belongs to a time when the Davidic line was established on the throne.

There is some doubt as to the reference of the words, "until the day of the captivity of the land," in chapter xviii. 30. Some suppose that the time implied is the same as that mentioned in the succeeding verse, viz., "all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh," and an ancient manuscript actually reads "until the day of the captivity of the ark." If the reference is to the overthrow of the northern kingdom, it would follow that the latest hand traceable in the book belongs to the time of the Captivity, but it is quite likely that the expression "captivity" was applied to other national calamities, although, as it is said in the Talmud, "a greater captivity causes a former one to be forgotten." At all events, there can be no doubt that the Book of Judges contains elements of a much earlier date. The song of Deborah (chap. v.) has all the freshness and fire of a contemporaneous production, and is regarded on all hands as belonging to the time whose stirring events it relates.

* So the Revised Version now reads. The name Moses is believed to have been purposely changed to Manasseh by pious scribes, out of respect to the memory of the Lawgiver.

As to the accounts of the deeds of the various judges, it has been supposed by some that they were collected from oral tradition and from different quarters, the tribe or family to which the respective leader belonged having, in the form of popular story, preserved the memory of its hero's exploits. The recitals are, at all events, of a popular cast. The fragments of poetry, parables and proverbs, references to common customs, and the graphic manner in which the various characters are depicted and their actions described—the deed itself being more prominent than its moral character—are all characteristic of such a kind of early national literature. There is, however, no ground for the supposition that each of the tribes contributed a picture to the national collection; for, though there are twelve judges in all, they are not distributed over the twelve tribes.

From whatever source the accounts were derived they have been put together on a fixed plan, and made to illustrate one guiding principle, as has already been said. It may be added that the simplicity of the style, the minute accuracy of topographical detail, the variety of incident, and, above all, the absence of any attempt to conceal or palliate the failings of the characters described, all combine to give the impression that we have before us, not fabulous or mythical tales, but true narratives of rough but brave deeds, such as might be looked for in a transitional state of society, when men had hard problems to solve, and often solved them in a rough and ready manner.

5. *Situation.*—The situation of Israel in the period covered by these books is a very peculiar one. Deprived of the leadership of Moses and Joshua, the tribes are left as a rule to their individual self-government, and, scattered to their various territories, they are exposed to various dangers and have their various vicissitudes. The Book of Joshua had partly prepared us for the spectacle which is here presented, and these books supply to a great extent what is lacking there of information as to the manner in which a permanent settlement was effected in Canaan.*

The problem before the people is to take firm possession of the land as their home. They are not reinforced by fresh arrivals of kindred tribes, as other invaders have been; they do not seek to conquer Palestine as a province, and hold it by armed force, as great empires have added to their dominions; neither are they allowed to amalgamate with the native races and make a mixed stock, as has generally been the rule in the occupation of a land by a conquering race. But these very circumstances

* See Joshua, § 4, p. 62.

render their task all the more difficult; and the Book of Judges shows us the two great dangers to which the situation chiefly exposed them.

In the first place, it shows that they suffered more from the seductions of peace than from the hardships of war. So long as they were an armed host, they were true to their calling and invincible. But the time taken to subdue the land was, after all, comparatively short, and many of the native races were left in the midst of Israel, as the book shows. Thus, the first sharp struggle of the conquest over, when the native races of the land had given up the contest, or contented themselves with holding a few positions of advantage, the original warlike ardour of the conquerors abates, and they begin to taste the sweets of peace in a land of fertility and plenty. Dependent to a great extent for local information on the natives around them, and taking advantage of their labour or observing their modes of agriculture, they would come to mingle with them in the ordinary occupations of life. From children like themselves, from bondmen and bondwomen in their homes, the younger generation of Israel would imbibe superstitious notions; and the past history shows too plainly how deeply saturated the minds of the parents already were with such notions. From this point the transition would be easy to the apostasy described in the Book of Judges; the local shrines venerated by the Canaanites would be visited by the Israelites, and the local deities, regarded as givers of plenty, would be acknowledged and reverenced. Thus, becoming like the nations whom they had supplanted, they run the imminent risk of sharing their fate. Moab, Ammon, and Amalek, on the south and east; the Canaanite kingdom of Jabin on the north; the roving Midianites and the children of the east, like the modern Bedawin Arabs, from the desert; and the rising power of the Philistines on the south-west, in turn take advantage of their weakness and reduce them to straits.

In the second place, from the dispersion of the tribes, there was danger of that national unity being broken, on which the success of Israel depended. The old system of local government by elders, and the assignment of definite territories to the individual tribes, while keeping each single tribe from breaking up, would tend to make each its own centre. The provision of a national assembly no doubt existed, and the high-priest was there to deliver the sacred oracle when it was asked; but these provisions, it is observable, come into fuller view only in the time of revived national life under Samuel, and are scarcely noticeable in the Book of Judges.

Between these two dangers, then, Israel is placed during this

period, and the history of the judges is the history of their deliverance from them. Each successive oppression falls upon them when they forget the Lord and serve other gods; the pressure felt at each new point brings home to the tribe concerned its isolation and its inability to cope single-handed with the enemy. In their distress they return unto the Lord, whom in their prosperity they had forgotten; the necessity of combination revives their feeling of national unity; and thus by the very backslidings of the time they are disciplined for a better future. The failures and the successes of the period culminate in the time of Samuel, in whose days the light of Divine revelation, which had fitfully flickered up in the period of the judges, begins to shine steadily in the teaching of the prophets, and the sporadic rule of judges merges in the settled reign of kings.

6. *Relation to other Books.*—The contrast presented by the Book of Judges and those of the Pentateuch and Joshua in the matter of the religious observances and life of Israel is very marked. In the Book of Joshua there were references to the law of Moses, and Joshua and Eleazar are seen acting still with the old authority of Moses and Aaron. Here, on the contrary, there is not one reference to the law, and from the greater part of the book we could scarcely infer that such a law had been given. We hear nothing of the service of the Tabernacle, the ark of the covenant is only incidentally mentioned (xx. 27, 28), and, in general, we are told very little about the religious usages of the people. Not only so, but what we are told reveals a state of matters which we do not naturally expect. For, besides the general statement as to the worship of heathen gods, the conceptions of worship exhibited by Micah and the Danites, the degraded position of the Levites, the conduct of a godly man like Gideon in setting up an ephod in his house at Ophrah, the pictures given of the characters of Jephthah and Samson, and indeed the whole view that we obtain of the religious condition of the time, seem sadly out of keeping with the requirements of the law and with the training and experience which Israel had enjoyed. Hence those who maintain the late date of the Mosaic system point to the Book of Judges in proof of their contention that the religious institutions of Israel grew up by development from a crude stage such as that book represents.

Now, as to the religious practice of Israel, it is not sufficiently borne in mind that the very books of the Pentateuch, which relate to the giving of the law and its acceptance by the people, record gross violations of it from the very commencement, and prepare us for the declension which is witnessed in the time of the Judges. Again, the argument drawn from the silence of this

book as to observances of worship is very misleading. The statements as to the worship of Jehovah and the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth are given in the same general terms, "They forsook the Lord and served other gods." If we accept the one half of the statement, we must accept the other; and if the worship of the Baalim consisted in formal and definite acts, the worship of Jehovah, which was neglected, must also have had its definite recognised forms. The brief notice therefore implies a recognised religious service quite different from that of the surrounding heathen. It is further to be remembered that none of these books professes to give a complete view of all that occurred in the time to which it relates. Many things happened, many observances must have been in existence, many regulations for civil and religious life must have been in exercise, of which not a word is said.

The little story of Ruth, relating to this same time, had it been the only account of that period that had come down to us, would have led us to believe that the period was one of idyllic peace and fervent piety. So also when the Book of Samuel opens, it discloses to us the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and a regular worship, overlaid with corruptions, but certainly not borrowed from the Canaanites, as generally recognised and observed. Even the corrupt forms in which the religion of the time of the Judges manifests itself, prove the existence of a better worship of which they were perversions. The position in which the Levites are represented is mean enough; but who were these Levites at all, if, according to the view of the advanced critics, the tribe of Levi had entirely disappeared, and the Levitical guild arose at a later time by the gradual elevation of a priestly caste? Finally, the rallying of the tribes to a common standard in time of danger proves the existence of tribal organisation and the consciousness of national unity, such as the accounts of the Pentateuch attest, and is inconsistent with the modern theory of the immigration and independent settlement of various tribes.

A great deal is made of the fact that, in Deborah's song, in the muster-roll of the tribes, no mention is made of Judah, as if this were a proof that at that time the great southern tribe had not yet risen into importance. Whether this omission arose from the fact that Judah was distant from the scene of danger and conflict, or it is an indication that even at this time the southern tribe was assuming that semi-independent position in which it already appears under the first kings, the argument drawn from it is very unsafe. In the summary given in chap. i. of the territory occupied by the tribes, all those in the west of the Jordan are mentioned except Issachar, although in Deborah's song that

tribe bears the brunt of the fighting against Jabin (v. 15); and there are similar striking omissions in other books.*

7. *The Period.*—We cannot, therefore, take the period of the Judges as the starting point of the national history of Israel, nor regard the religious practice of the time as the germ out of which future institutions were slowly developed. At the same time, to ignore the fact that religious life was at a low ebb would be opposed to the plain teaching of the books before us. All the narratives, both of the Pentateuch and of the succeeding books, agree in representing the law as too highly pitched for the people's life, an ideal for them to aim at, a standard to reprove them. In their first ardour at its delivery, they are willing to say, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," and, under the tension of the struggle of the conquest they adhered so far to their resolution. But a nation such as they were is not easily educated to the point of a permanent conformity to a law such as they acknowledge. It was only some sixty years from the time when the law was given to the death of Joshua, when they became exposed to every temptation which would appeal to their inborn superstition and draw them away from their fidelity; and the consequence, though it may not agree with our preconceived notions of development, is too consistent with human experience and with the history of religious progress. The age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles exhibits an ignorance and superstition which make the existence of the Apostolic age almost incredible. Even in the days of the Apostles themselves, as we gather from St. Paul's Epistles, there prevailed among professing Christians practices sadly at variance with the religion to which they adhered; and nowhere is the vast distance between a truth taught and a truth apprehended more manifestly apparent than in the case of the disciples of Christ while He was with them. The period of the Judges is intelligible on the supposition that a religion had been given to Israel, up to whose standard they were to be gradually raised; and the sacred writer, while putting faithfully on record the shortcomings of the period, recognises the design of Providence even in these. It was an important period in the religious education of the people; their enemies were left among them, and they were left to struggle with them, that by them God might "prove Israel" (iii. 1).

* See, for example, Joshua, § 4, p. 62.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

1. *Name.*—The books designated in the Jewish lists the *Former Prophets* are four in number, viz., Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; in other words, the two Books of Samuel, as we now have them, are reckoned as one, and likewise the two Books of Kings. The division into two of each of these books, which now prevails and is followed in our English Bible, is found in the Septuagint and other early versions. These versions, however, regarded the Books of Samuel and Kings as forming one connected series, the four parts of which were called the four Books of *the Kingdoms* or of *the Kings*. The earliest printed Hebrew Bibles adopted that division and retained even the double titles; so that the First Book of Samuel was called by that name, and also "the First Book of the Kings," while what is now the First Book of Kings was so designated and was also called "the Third Book of the Kings." This mode of reckoning had its justification in the fact that in the four books taken together we have the history of the Kings or of the two Kingdoms from the very beginning to the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Yet, as literary productions, the Books of Samuel and those of Kings are from different hands, belong to different periods, and are respectively marked by clearly discernible characteristics.

It will be convenient to treat of the two Books of Samuel together, as they originally formed one whole and are closely connected together in subject and in literary features. The name of Samuel, which is attached to them, cannot, it is evident, denote authorship, for the record of his death comes as early as the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book. Yet there was an appropriateness in naming these books after the last of the Judges, who called to their office the first two kings and gave an impulse to the monarchy and the national life which long survived him. Both by his personal influence over Saul and David, and by the relation in which he stood to the prophetic movement, Samuel's activity may be said to extend to the close of the

period covered by the books which bear his name; so that the older title of the books is more felicitous than that given to them in the early versions.

2. *The Period.*—The history embraced in the Books of Samuel extends from the close of the period of the Judges to the death of David. As in the case of other books, a connection is maintained with the preceding and the succeeding periods, so as to present a continuous history. Thus, at the commencement, the judgeship of Eli is introduced to prepare for that of Samuel, who may be reckoned as the last of the judges; and, at the close, the reign of David, is represented as at an end, although, in fact, its final scenes are only first described in the First Book of Kings.

From the manner in which the narrative breaks off before the death of David some have concluded that the writer, who certainly lived after David's time (*see* 2 Sam. v. 5), did actually carry down his history till the close of David's reign, or even until the time of Solomon. It has even been supposed that the opening portion of the First Book of Kings may have originally been joined to the Books of Samuel. Considering, however, that Solomon actually began to reign before the death of his father, and looking to the manner in which the concluding chapters of 2 Samuel introduce a variety of matters belonging to the close of David's reign, without arranging them in strict chronological order, it is more probable that the present division is the original one, and that the absence of strict literary finish is to be explained by the fact that the author had written materials before him which he put together in the form in which he found them.

The history contained in these two books thus centres round the three principal personages who were prominent in the period. The period of Samuel extends to 1 Sam. xii., the reign of Saul to the end of the first book, while the second book narrates the events of the reign of David. But these periods, again, are so closely interwoven with one another that they cannot be represented independently. Samuel's activity begins while Eli is still judge, and is continued even after his own demission of that office. So under Saul's reign David is already the anointed king, and the events related in that period concern David as much as Saul; and finally, David's reign is not ended when the activity of Solomon begins. All this will be more apparent if we now take a summary view of the contents of the two books.

3. *Contents of First Book.*—The first book opens at the time when Eli was priest at Shiloh and the recognised judge of Israel. Samuel, the son of a praying mother, is dedicated by his parents to the service of the Lord, and grows up leading a pure priestly

life at the sanctuary, affording a silent rebuke to the corrupt lives of Eli's sons and a demonstration of the insufficiency of a mere hereditary priesthood. When the doom of the unfaithful priestly family is clearly denounced, he is specially marked out as a prophet, and is so regarded by the people at large (iii. 1—20). He commences his public work at Shiloh, and comes into national prominence when the threatened Divine vengeance falls upon Israel in the victory of the Philistines, the loss of the ark, and the ruin of Eli's house (iii. 21—v. 1). Under his wise and godly administration there is a revival of national piety and patriotism, the Divine favour is shown in the return of the ark from the country of the Philistines (v. 2—vii. 1), the heart of Israel is turned to God in penitence; and, in the strength of their restored zeal, they achieve a victory over their enemies at Ebenezer.

This was the turning-point in the national fortunes, the culmination of the influence of Samuel, who continued to foster the piety of the nation by circuits made from Ramah over the adjacent country (vii. 2—17). But the period had come when the national life of Israel was to assume a new form. The evils of the hereditary priestly power, on the one hand (viii. 1. ff.), and, on the other, the desire of the people to be like the neighbouring nations, prepared for the institution of the monarchy. The request of the people for a king is complied with, although the dangers to which this would lead are exposed, and the principle of a pure theocracy on which the nation was incorporated are emphasised (viii. 4—22). Saul is anointed by the prophet (ix. 1—x. 16), his appointment is ratified by the lot and by legal ordinance (x. 17—26), and vindicated against gainsayers by the king's successful exploit against the Ammonites (x. 27—xi. 15); and then Samuel formally lays down his office of judge (xii). The bravery of the new king is seen in the manner in which he wages war with the neighbouring Philistines and Amalekites, the valour of his son Jonathan being equally conspicuous (xiii., xiv.). The king is, however, constantly reminded by Samuel that he reigns under the direct command of God; and, after he has twice disobeyed instructions conveyed through the prophet (xiii. 8 ff., xv. 9 ff.), sentence of his rejection is pronounced, and it is intimated that a worthier man is to reign.

From this point onward to the end of the book we have an account of the gradual rise of David and of the fall of Saul. Chosen by God, David is set apart by prophetic anointing (xvi. 1—13), comes to the court of Saul, who is afflicted with melancholy (xvi. 14—23), and by his exploit against Goliath of Gath attracts the notice of the king, gains the friendship of Jonathan,

and wins favour with all the people (xvii. 1—xviii. 7). This popularity of David excites Saul's envy, so that he seeks by craft to compass his death, and finally pursues him with open hostility (xviii. 8—xix. 1). Warned by Jonathan, David first takes refuge with Samuel at Naioth in Ramah, whence, being further informed by his faithful friend of Saul's continued opposition, he flees to the Philistines, who send him back to Judah (xix. 2—xxi. 15). At Adullam there gathers round him a multitude of disaffected men, and he is joined by Gad the Seer, who advises him to remain in Judah. A fresh outburst of Saul's enmity, however, forces him to send his parents for safety to the land of Moab, and Saul's vengeance is wreaked upon the priests at Nob for their suspected encouragement of the outlaw (xxii.). Yet even in his exile David engages in warfare against the Philistines, the enemies of his country (xxiii. 1 ff.); and this exhibition of patriotism, together with his generosity in sparing Saul on two occasions when the king was in his power, causes the more thoughtful people in the country to regard him as a person to be respected.

After the death of Samuel, who had been his close friend, David is regarded by the nation as the divinely appointed leader; though he still has to elude the violence of Saul, being hunted from place to place, and narrowly escaping with his life at Keilah, Maon, Engedi, Paran and Ziph (xxiii.—xxvi.). He finally quits Judah, and seeks an asylum with Achish, King of Gath, who assigns him Ziklag as a place of residence. Still, however, he is at heart an enemy of the enemy of his country (xxvii., xxx.), and only by the jealousy of the lords of the Philistines themselves is saved from the necessity of taking part in a war against Judah (xxix., xxx.). Saul himself, driven to desperation, seeks to obtain, through the witch at Endor, some counsel from the departed Samuel, but hears only a repetition of the doom which the prophet had uttered while alive (xxviii.), is defeated by the Philistines at the battle of Gilboa, and falls by his own hand (xxxi.).

4. *Contents of Second Book.*—The second book is devoted to the reign of David. In chapters i.—iv., relating to the seven years and a half that he reigned over Judah in Hebron, we have the beautiful elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan, the account of the setting up of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, as king at Mahanaim, the fall of that prince and the extinction of the dynasty of Saul by the treacherous murder of Abner by Joab, and the assassination of Ishbosheth himself. The former crime is lamented by David in a beautiful elegy over Abner, and the latter he avenged by the execution of the murderers. The remaining

chapters (v.—xxiv.) relate to David's rule over all Israel in Jerusalem. Gaining a victory over the Jebusites he takes their city and makes it the capital of his kingdom and the royal residence (v. 1—16). After another victory over the Philistines, Jerusalem becomes also the seat of the ark of the covenant, and preparations are made for a more permanent and more magnificent representation of the national unity and worship. Directions are given regarding the building of the Temple, and promises of the continuance of the Davidic dynasty are conveyed through Nathan the prophet, who is the king's faithful guide and counsellor (v. 17—vii. 29). The boundaries of the kingdom are extended from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates by conquests over the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians (viii. 1—14): and the account of the prosperity of the empire is concluded with a description of David's magnificence and an enumeration of his court officials; his greatness being enhanced by the generosity he displayed towards the descendants of Saul and the firmness he exercised in dealing with outside enemies of his country (viii. 15—x. 19).

But another aspect of the history is presented in the chapters which follow. In these we see the domestic and personal life of David, with the consequences of his acts on the affairs of his later years and on the development of the succeeding history of the monarchy. His sin in the matter of Bathsheba (xi.) is followed by trouble, grief, and humiliation in his own family, culminating in the rebellion of Absalom (xii.—xv. 12). The flight of David from Jerusalem, the civil war, and the king's return after the victory, are narrated at length (xv. 13—xix. 40); and then follows a section showing the growing jealousy between Judah and the other tribes, breaking out in the revolt of Sheba the son of Bichri, and foreshadowing the rupture of the united kingdom (xix. 41—xx. 22).

The four concluding chapters contain supplementary matters of various kinds. Thus we have an account of the famine and the means by which it was removed (xxi. 1—14); lists of the names and notices of the exploits of David's mighty men (xx. 23—26; xxi. 15—22; xxiii. 8—39); poetical pieces of David's composition (xxii. 1—xxiii. 7); and, finally, an account of the numbering of the people, which was punished by a visitation of the plague and atoned for by sacrifice (xxiv.).

5. *Composition.*—From the preceding sketch of their contents it will be apparent that the two Books of Samuel are one connected composition, put together by some one who from the outset had the succeeding history and its close before his eye. At the same time the slightest perusal of the Books of Kings will show that

they have not come from the same hand as those before us. For example, there is no mention in the Books of Samuel of the Captivity, nor any reference to it, or even to the decline of the kingdom of the ten tribes ; whereas the writer of the Books of Kings has in view the catastrophe of the kingdoms, and narrates the downfall of both of them.

Again, in the Books of Samuel, the law is not quoted, and is only once referred to (in 1 Sam. x. 25), whereas the author of the Books of Kings sees in the past history which he relates the causes of the disasters which he has to record, passes condemnation on one king after another for departing from the ordinances of the law, and connects the national decline with the forsaking of the national religion and the tampering with idolatrous worship. So also, while the writer of the Books of Samuel makes no distinct citations of any written materials which he may have employed, except in one place in which he refers to the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i. 18), the writer of the Books of Kings, standing at a greater distance from the events which he records, cites his authorities, and refers to writings of which he has made use, wherein are to be found fuller details than those which he thought it his province to repeat.

Besides those differences the whole style and manner of composition show that the Books of Samuel constitute an independent work. As to the time of its composition, we have only slight indications to guide us to a decision. The absence of reference to the Captivity would prove that it was written before the Exile. That the writer lived a considerable time after the events which he relates may be concluded from the formula "till this day" which repeatedly occurs (1 Sam. v. 5 ; vi. 18 ; xxvii. 6 ; xxx. 25 ; 2 Sam. iv. 3 ; vi. 8 ; xviii. 18), and also from the reference to a usage existing "beforetime in Israel" (1 Sam. ix. 9), and the antiquarian remark as to the dress of the king's daughters (2 Sam. xiii. 18). Again, when the full number of years that David reigned both in Hebron and Jerusalem is stated (2 Sam. v. 5), it is plain that the writer wrote after David's death ; and when it is said (1 Sam. xxvii. 6) that "Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day," we must infer that the schism of the kingdom had by this time taken place (if indeed, the reference is not even, as some suppose, to the time when the kingdom of Judah alone existed).

Such references are, however, very general and indecisive, especially as we know so little of the process through which the Old Testament books may have passed before they assumed their final form ; and, accordingly, while some would place the composition of the Books of Samuel in the first decades after the

schism of the kingdom, others would bring the date down to a short time before the Babylonian Captivity, or even place it in the time of the Exile. But, at whatever time it was written, the book has the honest and fearless tone of the true prophetic spirit of ancient Israel. Although the greatest prominence is given to the reign of David, and the antecedent narrative, with evident purpose, leads up to him who was the first of the long dynasty of the kings of Judah, yet his faults and sins are depicted with so firm a hand that it is plain the book was not composed for the purpose of throwing a halo of fictitious glory round his character or magnifying the splendour of his reign. In this respect the tone of the writer is in marked contrast with that of a writer like Josephus, or even the author of the Book of the Chronicles, who looked back upon a period which was already long past and who necessarily regarded things from a different standpoint.

6. *Sources.*—Though the writer of these books makes sparing reference to written sources from which he may have drawn materials for his work, we may conclude with some certainty that he did make use of such compositions. The only direct reference is to the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i. 18), in which the lament on Saul and Jonathan was contained. Whether or not other poetical pieces found in the books were drawn from the same source, it is clear that they are not given as the author's own compositions, and are thereby shown to have been taken up by him from some source, oral or written, into his narrative. Such pieces are, the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1—10); David's lament over Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33 f.); the poetical piece in 2 Sam. xxii., which is the same as Psalm xviii.; and "the last words of David" given in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7.

It is quite probable, also, that the writer availed himself of official documents, state lists, and so forth, or even incorporated them bodily, in such passages as 2 Sam. xxi. 15—22; xxiii. 8—39, where there are lists of brave men in David's service and records of their exploits. In 2 Sam. viii. 16—18 (compare xx. 24), in the list of court officials a "recorder," or chronicler, and a "scribe," or secretary, appear. The existence of officials of this description makes it probable that documents of a public kind were at hand for reference and that writing was not uncommon at the time. Moreover, besides such public documents referred to or incorporated in the books, there are pretty evident traces of distinct narratives, referring to the same events or relating different series of events, which have been put together by the hand from which the books came in their completed form; and there is nothing in this supposition inconsistent with what we

otherwise know of the composition of the Old Testament books. It is quite probable that the prophetic men, in their addresses to the people that resorted to them, or in the assemblies of their disciples, gave forth recitals of events that were preserved orally or in writing, and were afterwards collected by the writers of these books. When two such accounts referring to the same events are preserved, it is almost certain that they will exhibit discrepancies, which, without an accurate knowledge of all the details, it may be difficult to reconcile.

For example, in the passages relating to David's first appearance at the court of Saul, there are some particulars which seem scarcely to be in harmony with one another. David is represented as having been summoned to the court to act as musician to Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 19—23): and yet, when the war with the Philistines breaks out, he is at home at Bethlehem attending to the sheep, comes only on an errand to the camp, apparently a stranger to warfare, and is unknown to the king (xvii. 12—31, 55—58). Accordingly many have been led to conclude that in chapters xvi. to xviii. there are really two accounts of David's entrance on public life, which have become fused together. It is remarkable that the Septuagint Version, in its older form as represented in the Vatican manuscript, does not contain several passages of these chapters, and, by their omission, exhibits a narrative which is consecutive and consistent throughout. And in this connection it is to be mentioned that the Hebrew text of the Books of Samuel seems to have been less carefully handed down than that of most of the books of the Old Testament, and that in several passages the Septuagint translators clearly had another text before them than that which is found in our Hebrew Bibles.

From literary causes of this kind, and also from displacement of materials, if, as it is probable, the books were composed out of different documents, discrepancies and difficulties occur in various passages, the explanation of which is otherwise not clear. Thus, it is said in 1 Sam. vii. 13, that "the Philistines came no more into the coast of Israel all the days of Samuel," and yet in chapter ix. 16, Saul is appointed king to save Israel from the oppression of the Philistines, and the severity of their oppression is described in x. 5 and xiii. So also there is a difficulty in understanding how Samuel's command to Saul to go down to Gilgal and wait for him seven days (1 Sam. x. 8) is so far separated from xiii. 8, which refers to that command.

Peculiarities like these do not, however, warrant the conclusion which some would draw from them that the one account or the other is false, or that one of the divergent accounts represents a

late and unhistorical conception. One would expect a later writer to strive after a harmonising of accounts rather than to introduce a contradiction; and the fact that different documents which formally present discrepancies are allowed to stand side by side is a strong presumption that they both came from ancient sources, and were believed by the compiler to be reconcilable from some point of view. It is most certainly an excess of criticism to assume that certain accounts of events that are similar and are stated to have occurred more than once, are merely different forms of a tradition of one and the same event. Twice the rejection of Saul is pronounced (1 Sam. xiii. 8—14, and xv. 12 ff.); twice he is spared by David (xxiv. and xxvi.); twice David flees to the Philistines (xxi. 10—15, and xxvii. 1 f.); twice the prophetic excitement comes upon Saul (x. 10—12, and xix. 22—24); and twice the "evil spirit of the Lord" seizes him (xviii. 10 f., and xix. 9 f.). But there is nothing impossible or, in the circumstances, improbable in all this; while the details in the different cases vary so much that the rise of the two narratives from one common event is not by any means clear.

7. *The Prophetic Order.*—Perhaps the most striking feature that presents itself in these books is the prophetic activity which begins with Samuel himself, and takes its place as a permanent influence in the religious development of the succeeding history. No explanation of the origin of prophecy is given; it is spoken of as a thing well recognised and understood; but some of its earlier manifestations are not a little remarkable. It is in connection with a communication of the Divine purpose to Samuel that it is said that "all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam. iii. 20). And this is in keeping with the idea of the prophet expressed in the Pentateuch; he is one in whose mouth God has put His words, and who speaks to the people all that God has commanded (Deut. xviii. 18). He was of old time called a seer (1 Sam. ix. 9); even in the writing prophets a prophecy is called a vision (Isaiah i. 1), and Amos tells us the *words* which he *saw*.

The prophetic activity of Samuel's days, manifested in the excitement and musical exercises of bands of prophetic men, has by some recent writers been explained simply as the result of high-strung patriotic feeling, which in Israel was always closely related to religion; and these manifestations have been regarded as altogether different from the regular activity of the prophets whose written words have come down to us. But this seems to be a confusion of cause and effect, for it is more natural to

explain the tension of religious and patriotic feeling as produced by the prophetic influence; the association of the prophets in companies shows that the movement was deeply rooted in the theocratic life, and the continuance of the so-called "schools of the prophets" down to a time at which written prophecy commences shows that the movement was not the result of temporary excitement. Moses, in fact, is, to the Old Testament writers, the type of the prophet who receives communications of God's will, "not in dark speeches" but plainly (Num. xii. 8), and makes it known with authority to God's people. And as at the birth of the nation we see Moses and Aaron standing together and acting in concert, as representatives of the prophetic and priestly influences, so here, at a revival of national life, Samuel combines in himself the two offices; and at all succeeding crises in the history, when the nation made a new advance, the two are found conjoined or working in harmony.

It cannot be satisfactorily proved that prophecy arose as a reaction against the priesthood, or that the two were, in their nature, antagonistic influences. The two are essentially there from the beginning, just because the religion had its two elements of spirit and outward form. At most an examination of the history will show that when, by a common tendency, the form came to be exclusively attended to, the prophetic voice was raised to declare that the form without the spirit was not only worthless but was wrong. This truth, expressed by Samuel in the words "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. xv. 22), is the burden of all succeeding prophecy; for the law was based on a fundamental covenant; and prophecy therefore, though not an enforcement of the law in its detailed prescriptions, is a continual insistence on the principle without which the law has no meaning.

But though the spirit of prophecy is thus as old as the covenant, the prophetic activity, as an organised and sustained movement, comes before us first in the time of Samuel, and so in Acts iii. 24, he is reckoned the first of the prophets. All the outward features of its manifestation, the highly strung feelings and ecstatic utterances of the prophetic bands, their concerted movement, and, as it would appear, the common life in the Naioth or cœnobite dwellings, are deeply interesting. We are left entirely to conjecture as to the mode in which the prophetic men spent their time, and the nature of the external association in which they were held together, and also as to the connection between their earlier manifestations and the so-called "schools of the prophets" in the times of Elijah and Elisha. Much ingenious speculation has been employed in the endeavour to

reconstruct these prophetic societies and to trace back to them various similar movements of later times. And though a great deal of this speculation has been unprofitable, the fact cannot be ignored that from this time is to be dated, if not the beginning, yet certainly the formal embodiment of a movement which lasted throughout the history of Israel, and was a most powerful feature in the moulding of the national religion and life.

8. *Poetic Activity.*—The connection of music with the prophetic activity of Samuel's time is noteworthy in several respects. The company of prophets whom Saul met coming down from the high place had "a psaltery and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them" as they prophesied (1 Sam. x. 5); and the association of music with prophecy seems to have been permanent, for we read of Elisha, on one occasion, calling for a minstrel, and "when the minstrel played the hand of the Lord came upon him" (2 Kings iii. 15). This musical element throws much light on the account of Saul's contact with the prophets. The word denoting "to prophesy" is, in fact, used also of the king's accessions of madness (1 Sam. xviii. 10), and is applied to "raving" generally. Thus a son of the prophets who came with a message to Jehu is contemptuously called a "mad fellow" by Jehu's brother officers (2 Kings ix. 11), and "to be mad" and "to act the prophet" are by Jeremiah spoken of as synonymous (Jer. xxix. 26). Yet the same word is employed to denote the prophet's normal activity, which was not necessarily accompanied with ecstatic utterances. And so when the writer of the Books of Chronicles is describing the provision made for the regular and orderly Temple music, he says, "they separated for the service certain of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" (1 Chr. xxv. 1—3, R.V.), which is explained farther on of "giving thanks and praising the Lord."

It is natural, indeed, to suppose that, as prophetic utterance was not always ecstatic, music was not always boisterous; and as prophecy did not die when the excited phase had passed, neither did music continue to be always associated with excitement. The time of Samuel was not the first period in the history of Israel when national song was called forth by the stirring of national feeling; but it was a time well fitted to give a special stimulus to the spirit of patriotism and religion to which the national songs of Israel give expression. Hence we may conclude that, as prophecy from this time onward took its place as an abiding element of the religious life of the nation, sacred song also from this time received a new impulse and entered upon a course of more regular development.

We are told that David sojourned for a time in Naioth at Ramah (1 Sam. xix. 18, 19), and he was not only befriended by Samuel, but closely associated with other prophetic men. Now the poetic activity of David was so famous that the whole collection of the Psalms has come to bear his name; and it is remarkable that he appears as a poet and musician just at the time when this movement took such a lively turn in the companies of the prophets. The Psalter is a collection of compositions belonging to ages far apart and to circumstances the most varied; but it is quite as unwarrantable to relegate the great bulk of them to late times (as some would do) as to ascribe them all in the mass to David or to his time. The combination of circumstances brought before us in the Books of Samuel, however, warrants the conclusion that from this time onwards *sacred* song received a strong impulse.

Cultivated in the prophetic circles, poetry not only retained its national and patriotic tone, but became also more exalted and spiritual in its religious expression, and entered therefore as a powerful factor into the history of the nation in the succeeding ages. And it is essential to bear this in mind if we would obtain a just appreciation and comprehensive idea of the development of the history of Israel. We must study the Psalms, as well as the historical and legal books, if we would follow the course which the Hebrew spirit took in the process of Divine education through which it passed; and such a study will show that, underneath the exterior of a common life that was sometimes rude enough, and alongside a ceremonial worship that was often corrupt, there was a current of religious feeling and genuine faith, bearing on the best of the nation to better conceptions of Divine things. The song of Hannah and the undisputed early productions of David give evidence of this, and the note struck in these compositions swells louder and louder as the volume of psalmody increases.

9. *Historiography.*—Among the prophetic men who appear at this early period are some who are mentioned in the much later Book of Chronicles as writers of histories. Nathan, Gad, and Samuel himself are thus spoken of:—"Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Samuel the seer, and in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the history of Gad the seer" (1 Chron. xxix. 29, R.V.). Now, although the history of Samuel here mentioned can hardly be the Books of Samuel before us, yet it is generally admitted that he must have occupied himself with work of this kind; and the reference of the Chronicler to such writings can only mean that works ascribed to these men existed in his day. The same writer

in other places refers to similar histories by other prophets of the reigns of various kings of a later period.*

That the later prophets occupied themselves with the writing of history we know from the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and everything tends to show that the movement in that direction began at a much earlier period. The time of Samuel was favourable to such a movement, a time when the nation became distinctly conscious of its national position and apprehended that it had a history to make. By that time it had a past to look back to, a future to which to look forward, and an arduous task before it in the present. Men of prophetic spirit, reflecting over these things, would become, as a matter of course, historians, politicians, and forecasters of the future; and all the prophets partake of these characters. From the addresses of Samuel and other prophets of that early time we may gather what were the subjects of thought and themes of discourse in the gatherings of the Naioth, in the circles of the prophetic men, and in the assemblies of a more public kind frequented by the people. The great deeds done for the nation, the faithfulness of God to His covenant, the duty of serving Him alone and avoiding all heathen contamination, would be insisted on, and reproofs for backsliding and warnings against idolatry would be freely administered. In such circles the stories of the patriarchs and the deeds of heroes of more recent times would be treasured and commented upon; and among such men there would be no lack of persons capable of writing down, and disposed to commit to writing, much that hitherto had been preserved orally.

The number of the names of men so employed which is given by the Chronicler is very considerable, as we have seen, and the series extends over the whole historical period. When, therefore, we know that the time of Samuel and that which followed it were favourable to this literary activity, and when we perceive the same spirit breathing through all the historical books, we may conclude that the authors of the "sources" out of which these books were composed, if not the authors of the books as they stand substantially before us, were just such prophetic men. No other men capable of executing such work are known to us, and when we substitute for such abstractions as Elohist, Jehovist, and so forth, the names of these prophetic historians, we seem to get a nearer view of the literary activity and religious life of ancient Israel. When we look at the leading men from Samuel onwards, who may be supposed to have concerned themselves with the writing of the nation's history, they are not men repre-

* See 2 Chr. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32; xxxiii. 18—19.

senting each a single idea or an exclusive tendency, but men standing in close relations to the complex circumstances of the growing life of the nation. David is in equally close fellowship with priests and with prophets; and whenever there was a stirring of the national life, the best of the nation, of whatever class, participated in the movement.

Moreover, if there was thus a succession of men from Samuel's time onwards who concerned themselves with the writing of national compositions, it is not difficult to understand how such prophets as Amos and Hosea, who open the series of writing prophets, employ a literary language and are masters of a finished style. When Wellhausen seeks to explain the fact that we have no written compositions of Elijah and Elisha, while Amos and Hosea, a century later, appear suddenly as authors, all he has to say is that, in the meantime, a non-literary had developed into a literary age. But the details that we gather from the books of Samuel tend to show that a process of preparation had been going on, and that literary activity was not a hasty product. Just as the earliest writing prophets claim to be not teachers of a new truth but upholders of an older faith, so as authors they are not sudden apparitions, but the outcome of a preceding literary activity.

10. *Transition to the Monarchy.*—The great historical event of the period covered by these books is the setting up of the monarchy in Israel, and, particularly, the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, which lasted to the close of the nation's history. That the people of Israel continued up to this time without a king, while surrounded by peoples that possessed that form of government, is a proof that there must have been a strong bond of national union among the tribes; and that the kingdom, when once established, so soon gained wide dominion and paramount influence, is a proof that the tribal organization was well compacted. Moreover, that the dynasty of David took root so firmly and held its position for so many generations, proves that it was based upon the principles which had hitherto held the people together, answered the nation's needs at the time, and fostered their aspirations. The abortive attempt of Abimelech to rule at Shechem (Judges ix.), and the complete collapse of Saul's house, show what the monarchy of Israel might have been if it had been a mere political expedient. The fate of the northern kingdom, with its changes of dynasty and sudden revolutions, shows what the monarchy actually became when divorced from the theocratic principles which lay at the foundation of the national existence.

What these principles were appears from the attitude of Samuel towards both Saul and David: the king ruled, not by

the will of the people, much less according to his own arbitrary will, but by the will of God, and, equally with the most humble Israelite, he was a subject of the God of Israel, the Lord of Hosts. Saul, choosing to reign like the kings of the nations, forfeited his position, while David, recognising the constitution by which he ruled, had "a sure house." Closely identifying himself with the prophetic movement, he showed himself to be in sympathy with the spirit which kept the nation alive; careful for the outward observance of worship, and solicitous for the building of a Temple which should form a fitting centre for its exercise, he showed how sensible he was of the importance of maintaining a visible and striking manifestation of the faith which the nation professed. His own religious feeling and confident trust in God gave emphasis to these public acts; so that he became to the people the ideal of the Lord's anointed, identified with his people, the embodiment of the idea on which Israel, as a kingdom of priests, was constituted. From his time onward grew the expectation of a Messiah, who, as King, Priest, and Prophet, at the head of an ideal state, was to fulfil all things.

The influences that were to educate the people to higher spiritual conceptions were now at work, and the settled arrangements of a consolidated state afforded the framework within which these influences were to operate. God works slowly: in His providence the foundations were thus laid for compacting the nation that was to be the bearer of light to the world; and, though it needed the discipline of centuries to bring it to maturity, there was planted at this early time the seed of a kingdom that would never be moved. In its outward aspect the age of David is, in many respects, rude enough. The wars that he waged, the generals who served him, the people who followed him into battle, are very much like what we see elsewhere in "secular" history; the character of the king himself is far from perfect; and the historian gives the best guarantee of the truth of his narrative in placing all these things faithfully on record. But when we look beneath the surface, we see that the strivings and strugglings of men in human passions were being guided by a Divine hand; and only thus can we explain the fact that while great empires have crumbled into oblivion, the little kingdom set up in the person of David, the son of Jesse, survived the calamities of neighbouring states and handed down to the world an imperishable inheritance of blessing.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS.

1. *The Books as one whole.*—The two Books of Kings, like the two Books of Samuel, are to be regarded as one work.* The title they bear has been applied to them because they give an account of the history of Israel during the greater part of the monarchical period, viz. from the accession of Solomon to the Babylonian Captivity. Though the two Books of Kings continue the story of the two Books of Samuel in such a manner that the series of the four books constitutes a connected history, yet the most superficial examination reveals the fact that the two works are independent compositions from different hands; and a closer examination brings to light striking differences in their conception and literary form. They must also have been written at different times; for whereas the Books of Samuel make no reference to the Babylonian Captivity, nor even to the decline of the northern kingdom, the Books of Kings bring down the history to the thirty-seventh year of the Captivity (2 Kings xxv. 27 ff).

That the history closes at that particular point is a pretty clear indication that the writer who was last engaged on the work did not survive the Captivity, and from an expression in one passage it may be inferred that he lived among the exiles. In 1 Kings iv. 24, it is stated in regard to Solomon, according to the Authorised Version, that he had dominion "over all the region on this side the river," *i.e.* the river Euphrates; but the original, as given literally in the margin of the Revised Version, has "all the region beyond the river," an expression which would be more appropriate if used by a writer in Babylon. At the same time, however, there are in both the Books of Kings a number of passages which speak of the kingdom of Judah as still in existence and the Temple as still standing; † and the

* See the Books of Samuel, § 1, p. 77.

† See 1 Kings viii. 8, ix. 21, xii. 19; 2 Kings x. 27, xiii. 23.

frequently recurring formula "till this day" seems always to refer to the period before, and chiefly to the period immediately before, the Captivity.

Expressions of this kind favour the supposition that a historical work, similar to the work before us, was composed shortly before the Exile, and that what we now have is a revision or later edition of the same, continued to the point at which its history closes. In one passage, the seventeenth chapter of the second book, we may even detect traces of the different editions; for in verses 18 and 21, belonging to the original work, Judah is represented as still a kingdom, whereas verses 19 and 20, added by the last writer, indicate that the southern kingdom also had been swept away. The statement of the Talmud is that Jeremiah wrote the Books of Kings, and certain similarities of style give a show of support to that view; yet the literary resemblances are such as can be accounted for by the writers living about the same time and moving amid the same circumstances; and, moreover, it is most probable that the last chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, which most closely resembles the corresponding narrative of the Books of Kings, was added by an editor to the writings of the prophet. The truth is, there is no conclusive evidence to determine who was the author of the books before us.

2. *Divisions and Contents.*—The combined work embraced in these two books may be divided, according to the matters treated of, into three parts: the first relating to the reign of Solomon, the second to the divided kingdom, and the third to the surviving kingdom of Judah.

(i.) The *first part*, extending from chapter i. to xi. of the first book, is confined to the reign of Solomon. It has been noted in the chapter on the Books of Samuel (§ 2) that these chapters are closely related to the conclusion of those books, inasmuch as Solomon began his reign during the lifetime of his father David. By the wisdom and foresight of the prophet Nathan, who had been David's close friend and faithful counsellor, the throne was secured for Solomon in the face of an attempt at usurpation on the part of Adonijah (chapter i.). The young king, being publicly proclaimed and exhibited to the people, receives his father's last charge, and, after David's death, takes such measures against those who had conspired to exclude him from the succession, that his throne is firmly secured (chapter ii.). The writer then gives an account of the internal condition of the kingdom during Solomon's reign (iii. 1—ix. 9). The wisdom of the king is shown in the matter of the dream which he had at Gibeon (iii. 1—15), and in his decision of a difficult matter referred to him for

judgment (iii. 16—28). Then follows a description of the arrangements of the royal household, of the distribution of high officers up and down the land, and of the king's magnificence and fame, which excited the admiration of neighbouring princes (chapter iv.). Chief among these was Hiram, king of Tyre, with whom Solomon made a friendly treaty. By the terms of this treaty he received, in exchange for the produce of the country, materials and workmen for the construction of the Temple and the royal palace, the particulars of which are contained in chapters v.—vii., while chapter viii. concludes the narrative with a full account of the consecration of the Temple and Solomon's dedicatory prayer.

It is to be observed that this section opens and closes with significant hints of the danger attending so much prosperity and luxury. Thus, in chapter iii. 1—3, it is stated that Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took his daughter to wife, and that the king and the people sacrificed in the high places; and in chapter ix. 1—9, after the dedication of the Temple, along with a promise of blessing in case of obedience, there is a warning given that, if the people should serve other gods, their land would be made desolate and their Temple ruined. From the internal affairs of the kingdom the historian passes to its foreign relations (ix. 10—xi. 43). Details are given of Solomon's intercourse with Hiram, king of Tyre, his alliance by marriage with the king of Egypt, his maritime commerce with Ophir, and the visit of the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem (ix. 10—x. 13). The description of the wealth and luxury to be seen at the court and capital (x. 14—29) is significantly followed by an enumeration of the heathen wives whom Solomon married, who turned away his heart from the God of his fathers, and led him to pay reverence to the deities of their native lands (xi. 1—8); and this leads to a solemn denunciation of the king's unfaithfulness, and a prophecy of the disruption of the kingdom (xi. 9—13). The historian then indicates the quarters from which trouble was to arise, by enumerating the "adversaries" raised up in Solomon's reign—Hadad the Edomite, Rezon of Zobah, and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, of Ephraim; and with a distinct intimation of the impending schism the account of Solomon's reign closes (xi. 14—43).

(ii.) The history of the divided kingdom is the subject of the *second part*, embracing 1 Kings xii. to 2 Kings xvii. This part may be divided into three periods: the first extending to the time of Ahab, king of Israel, during which there was a sharp opposition between the northern and southern kingdoms; the second coming down to the commencement of the reign of Joash

of Judah, during which, owing to a marriage alliance of the two reigning families, the northern kingdom stood in close friendly relations with the southern; and the third reaching to the downfall of Samaria, when the two kingdoms are again less friendly, or even at hostility.

(*a*) In the first period (1 Kings xii. 1—xvi. 28) the historian shows how the discontent of the people broke out on the death of Solomon, and how it was, by the incapacity of his son Rehoboam, goaded to open revolt under Jeroboam; how the schism was recognised by the prophets as a thing "from the Lord;" and how it was widened and perpetuated by Jeroboam's setting up of sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel, and his appointment of priests who were not of Levitical extraction (xii. 1—xiv. 20). In the southern kingdom, Rehoboam and Abijam hold the reins of government with weak hands, and the former suffers humiliation from the forces of Egypt, while both are in constant hostility with the northern kingdom (xiv. 21—xv. 8). Asa, however, brings about a reformation, and, by the aid of Benhadad, king of Syria, is successful in his conflict with Israel (xv. 9—24). In the northern kingdom, the dynasty of Jeroboam comes to an end with the death of his son Nadab, after a reign of two years; Baasha usurps the throne, and, after a reign of twenty-four years, is succeeded by his son Elah, who, after a reign of two years, is murdered by his own servant Zimri. But the murderer had no sooner seized the throne than he was successfully attacked by Omri, the head of the army, between whom, again, and Tibni there arose a civil war of four years' duration, resulting in the success of Omri and the founding of the dynasty which came to bear his name.

(*b*) The second period, which covers the duration of the house of Omri, is treated of in 1 Kings xvi. 29—2 Kings xi. 20. Ahab, the son of Omri, during a reign of twenty-two years, raises the northern kingdom to a condition of great outward prosperity, the capital being finally fixed at Samaria. But having married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Phœnicia, he introduces the worship of the Tyrian Baal and Astarte as the state religion. Against this a vigorous protest is raised by the prophet Elijah, by whose exertions, in the face of the queen's opposition, the priests of Baal are slain and the people of Israel brought back in a measure to the recognition of Jehovah as the national God (1 Kings xvi. 29—xix. 14); intimations of further judgments on the house of Omri and more thorough reformation of religion being given in the selection of Elisha and Jehu to carry on the work which Elijah had begun (xix. 15—21). Ahab wages successful war against Benhadad, king of Syria, but the tyranny of

his rule is exhibited in his treatment of Naboth of Jezreel (xx.—xxi.); and, in a renewed war with Syria, he suffers defeat at Ramoth-Gilead, and is mortally wounded (1 Kings xxii. 1—40). In this battle he was accompanied by Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, who was in alliance, for warlike and commercial purposes, first with Ahab, and then with his successors, Ahaziah and Joram (1 Kings xxii. 40—53; 2 Kings iii.). The alliance between the two kingdoms was more closely cemented by the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, the infamous queen of the northern kingdom (2 Kings viii. 16—18), a union of fatal issue to the kingdom of Judah.

Meanwhile Elisha, after the translation of his master Elijah, exercises the prophetic office, acting as the head of the prophetic associations in various centres, and recognised as a prophet of God even in the kingdom of Syria (2 Kings iv. 1—viii. 15). But the iniquities of the house of Omri brought about at last the ruin of that dynasty, and involved also in disaster the allied house of Judah. For Joram, king of Israel, being wounded in war with the Syrians, is suddenly attacked by his impetuous general Jehu and put to death along with Jezebel and her grandson Ahaziah, king of Judah, who happened to be at Jezreel on a visit to his sick kinsman. Jehu, regarding himself as the executioner of a Divine sentence, orders the slaughter of the priests of Baal, roots out the foreign worship, kills all the members of the royal family on whom he can lay hands, and establishes a new dynasty in the northern kingdom (2 Kings ix.—x.). At Jerusalem, Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, hearing of the murder of her son at Jezreel, puts to death all the seed royal, the infant Joash alone escaping, and reigns herself for six years. At the end of that time, the young prince, who had been brought up by Jehosheba, daughter of king Jehoram, is shown to the people by Jehoiada, the high priest, and is proclaimed and accepted as king; Athaliah herself perishing in the insurrection (2 Kings xi.).

(*c*) With her death and the disappearance of the house of Omri the third period begins, in which the relations of the two kingdoms are again those of indifference or hostility (2 Kings xii. —xviii.). Joash of Judah, under the guidance of Jehoiada, the high priest, puts away the idolatrous customs that had been introduced by Athaliah, and brings about a reform of worship; but he had to buy off an invasion of Hazrel, king of Damascus (2 Kings xii.). In the northern kingdom, the rulers of the house of Jehu follow all the evil courses of their predecessors, the Phœnician Baal-worship excepted, but in the struggle with the

kingdom of Syria they are more fortunate than their southern neighbours (2 Kings xiii. 1—13, 22—25), and inflict humiliation also upon the kingdom of the south. For Amaziah of Judah, the successor of Joash, proudly elated by a victory gained over the Edomites, challenges the king of Israel to combat, and Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, comes up against him, defeats him and breaks down part of the wall of Jerusalem (xiv. 1—16). Joash of Israel is succeeded by his son Jeroboam II., who rules with great energy for forty-one years, and regains nearly all the territory formerly possessed by Israel (xiv. 23—29).

At the same time, also, the kingdom of Judah, under Azariah, or Uzziah, who had a reign of fifty-two years, enjoys great prosperity. The northern kingdom, however, having reached its highest point of greatness under Jeroboam, hastens to its decline as soon as his firm grasp of government is relaxed. With the death of his son Zechariah, the dynasty of Jehu comes to a close. A succession of usurpers occupies the throne, while the beginning of the end is seen in the steady advance of the Assyrians and the subjection of the weakened kingdom of Israel to the great eastern empire. Shallum reigns only a month when he is murdered by Menahem, who gives tribute to Pul of Assyria to gain his support on the throne. His son, Pekahiah, after a reign of two years, is dethroned by Pekah, one of his officers, in whose reign Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, falls upon the country, takes a great part of territory, and carries away many of the inhabitants; and Pekah in turn is dethroned and succeeded by Hoshea (2 Kings xv. 8—31).

Meantime, in the kingdom of Judah, Uzziah had been succeeded by his son Jotham, whose reign is marked by the beginning of opposition from Pekah of Israel, aided by Rezin of Damascus (xv. 32—38). The hostility is continued in the reign of his son Ahaz, who, seeing his capital besieged and territory being lost, sends presents and offers of submission to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, as conditions of receiving help against his two powerful neighbours (xvi. 1—8). In consequence of this the king of Assyria marches against Damascus and kills Rezin; and, later on, Shalmaneser, who had accepted Hoshea as a tributary, "finds conspiracy in him" and comes up against him. The army of Assyria, after a siege of three years, takes and destroys Samaria, thus putting an end to the northern kingdom, multitudes of the people being carried captive and foreigners settled in their room (2 Kings xvi. 9—17).

(iii.) The kingdom of the ten tribes having thus come to an end, the historian, in the *third part*, constituting the remainder of the book (2 Kings xviii.—xxv.), follows the fortunes of the

surviving kingdom of Judah. Hezekiah, in the sixth year of whose reign Samaria fell, set about the work of reformation in his dominions, and received powerful aid in this work from the prophet Isaiah. God's pleasure was manifested to him in the miraculous deliverance from the invading army of Sennacherib, and in his restoration from a dangerous illness; but he was reproved for his conduct on the occasion of the embassy of Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, and a hint was given to him of the doom that was to overtake his kingdom (xviii.—xx.).

After his death the impiety of his successors, Manasseh and Amon, hastened the threatened disaster (xxi.). Not even the reforming zeal and pious intentions of Josiah, in whose reign the law-book was found in the Temple, nor the reforms in accordance with its requirements which he set on foot, could avert the catastrophe. Josiah himself is killed fighting at Megiddo against Necho, king of Egypt (xxii. 1—xxiii. 30), who places on the throne Eliakim (or Jehoiakim) instead of another son of Josiah, named Jehoahaz, who had, by the will of the people, reigned three months at Jerusalem. Jehoiakim is hard pressed by the Babylonian power as well as by the neighbouring peoples; and his son and successor, Jehoiachin, is reduced so low that he surrenders himself to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who carries off the king and ten thousand of the people, and sets on the throne Mattaniah, the king's uncle, changing his name to Zedekiah.

With this king the independence of the kingdom of Judah comes to an end; for Nebuchadnezzar, to punish him for an attempt to throw off the yoke of subjection, marched with an army into Judah, and after a siege of about three years took the capital, plundered and destroyed it, carrying captive or putting to death large numbers of the inhabitants. The few that remained, having risen against Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor, and having put him to death, took refuge in Egypt to escape the wrath of the king of Babylon. The land was thus reft of its inhabitants, and the Book of Kings closes when thirty-seven years of the Captivity had passed, king Jehoiachin being still alive and treated with honour in the land of his captivity (xxiii. 31—xxv. 30).

3. *Purpose and Plan.*—From the foregoing sketch of the contents of the Books of Kings, we may gather what was the purpose of the writer in composing them, and may note the literary form of the composition. His object evidently was to exhibit the bloom and decay of the kingdom of Israel, and to trace the influences which moulded its varying destiny. He

represents the whole history, from first to last, as under the direct control of the religious government of Jehovah, the national God, and he proceeds on the fixed idea that the promise given to David of a sure house remained in force during all the vicissitudes of the divided kingdom, and was not even frustrated by the fall of the kingdom of Judah. This confidence appears in the terms of David's farewell charge to his son Solomon (1 Kings ii. 4), is repeated on the occasion of the schism of the ten tribes (1 Kings xi. 34—39), and recurs again and again to explain why the wickedness of successive kings did not make a final end of the state.* Even at the close of the narrative, in the significant mention of the royal treatment in captivity of the last king of David's stock (2 Kings xxv. 27—30), the writer silently conveys the promise that a branch was to grow out of its roots. In this respect the author of the book before us is in accord with the writers of other historical books of the Old Testament, particularly with the writer of the Books of Samuel (see 2 Sam. vii.).

From a literary point of view, however, this book has characteristics which mark its individuality and distinguish it particularly from the preceding Book of Samuel. The writer lays out for himself a sort of literary framework, marked by the recurrence of the same or similar phrases, to indicate the beginning, continuance, and close of successive reigns, reminding us, in this feature, of the style of the Book of Judges; and within this literary framework his materials are arranged with great regularity. Thus, at the commencement of a reign, it is generally stated how old the king was when he came to the throne, how many years he reigned, and, in the case of the kings of Judah, what was his mother's name. There is then a general judgment pronounced on the character of his reign, whether he "did that which was right" or "did that which was evil" in the eyes of the Lord; and, at the close of the reign, the place of burial is mentioned and the name of the succeeding ruler given,† with a reference to another authority in which a fuller account of the king's deeds is recorded.

In giving the history of the divided kingdom, the author's mode of proceeding generally is to record first the events relating to the northern kingdom, and then to give the contemporaneous history of the kingdom of Judah, thus dividing the history off into periods of longer or shorter duration. So closely is this mode of writing adhered to, that events which have a common bearing on the two kingdoms are related separately under the

* See 1 Kings xv. 4, 5; 2 Kings viii. 19: xix. 34; xx. 6.

† See *e.g.* 1 Kings xi. 43; xiv. 20, 21; xv. 26; 2 Kings iii. 2.

head of each. Thus, under the reign of Pekah of Israel it is stated (2 Kings xv. 20) that Tiglath-pileser came up and took part of his territory, while under the contemporaneous reign of Ahaz of Judah (xvi. 7 ff.), we see that the invasion was at the instance of the southern king, contrived as a relief against his enemies on the northern frontier. In the same way the invasion of Shalmaneser is mentioned under the reigns of Hoshea of Israel (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6) and of Hezekiah of Judah (xviii. 9 ff.); and under the contemporaneous reigns of Asa of Judah and Baasha of Israel the identical statement is repeated that "there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (1 Kings xv. 16, 32).

4. *Sources.*— A work extending over so long a period of history as is covered by the Books of Kings can evidently not be the expression of the direct personal knowledge of the writer. From the nature of the composition, he must have had recourse to written materials; and there are differences in style in different parts which suggest that the work is to a certain extent the result of compilation. The literary peculiarity which has been pointed out in the preceding paragraph makes it probable that the writer availed himself of records of the two kingdoms in their separate forms, and put so much of them together, in their original words, as suited his purpose. That he was not careful to adjust his extracts to the circumstances of his own time we can see by several examples: as where it is said that the staves of the ark remained "unto this day" as they were placed in Solomon's time (1 Kings viii. 8), and that "Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day" (xii. 19). So also there is a close verbal agreement between the passages 2 Kings xviii. 15—xx. 19 and Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix., as also between many parts of the Books of Kings and those of Chronicles, indicating that they are drawn from common sources.

And here we come upon a feature which distinguishes the Books of Kings broadly from the books which precede them. Whatever use the writer of the Books of Samuel, for instance, made of pre-existing written documents, he makes sparing reference to them by name;* and in the case of these and other books it is only by critical examination that we can separate the different sources employed. It would seem that, for the events recorded in the earlier chapters of the Books of Kings, the author of these books made use of documents relating to the reign of David, such as, although unnamed, were used also by the writer of the Books of Samuel. But in the succeeding parts of his

* See the Books of Samuel, § 6, pp. 83, 84.

work he makes constant reference, at the close of the various reigns, to certain records by name from which he apparently drew his materials, and to which he refers his readers for "the rest of the acts," and so forth, of the kings whose doings he has briefly related.

The works thus referred to are: "The Book of the Acts of Solomon," for the reign of that king (1 Kings xi. 41); and for succeeding rulers, "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," to which there are seventeen references (1 Kings xiv. 19, &c.); and "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah," referred to fourteen times (1 Kings xiv. 29, &c.). Some have supposed that these were formal compositions of a historical character, of the nature of a work referred to in 2 Chronicles xxiv. 27, as "The Story of the Book of the Kings," and that our author made quotations from them for his account of the different reigns. But it is more probable that they were the State records of the two kingdoms, of a political and statistical character, kept by the official recorders or scribes, who are enumerated among the court officials.* This is rendered the more probable by the nature of the references. Thus, for example, the records of the kings of Judah are, under the reign of Asa, referred to for the rest of his acts, "and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built" (1 Kings xv. 23); and those of the kings of Israel, under the reign of Ahab, for "all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built" (1 Kings xxii. 29).

It is remarkable that the few cases in which there is no reference to these records at all are cases in which the reign came to a sudden or violent end, as those of Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah, who were both swept away in the furious onset of Jehu (2 Kings ix. 21—28), and of Hoshea of Israel, and Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah of Judah, who close their reigns amid the wreck of their respective kingdoms. From this we may infer that the records in question were made up at the close of each reign, and that in the cases mentioned they were left unfinished in the disasters which overtook the kings. Besides these documents of a more official description, it is pretty evident that the writer made use of other compositions of a more general and popular character, in which were related the sayings and doings of men like Elijah and Elisha, who figure so prominently in these books.

It will be observed that the passages which refer to these two prophets are interspersed in the general narrative, and form

* The Books of Samuel, § 6, pp. 83, 84.

connected pieces by themselves, capable of being removed without disturbing the adjacent history. Elijah is introduced abruptly, without explanation, into the narrative (1 Kings xvii. 1), and the accounts of his doings and those of his successor, Elisha, which are written in a more flowing style than the main portion of the books, are such as would not naturally have found a place in the State annals.

5. *Prophetic Activity.*—The prophetic activity which is seen commencing in the time of Samuel* was in full operation in the time of the kings; and the books before us, not merely by the personal notices they give of lives and acts of individual prophets, but by the close connection in which they represent these men as standing with the political and religious movements of the times, furnish materials for a history of prophetic activity as much as they exhibit the material and political growth of the nation. Thus, at the crisis of the handing over of the reins of government to Solomon, at the opening of the books, Nathan the prophet is even a more prominent person than either the king or his aged father (1 Kings i. 22 ff.). Ahijah of Shiloh, watching the course of events that was leading to the rupture of the kingdom, declares to Jeroboam with a voice of authority the destiny that is before him and the Divine purpose controlling the events (1 Kings xi. 29—39); and with equal authority he pronounces at a later time the doom which would befall the house of Jeroboam for their wickedness (xiv. 5—16).

On the other hand, Rehoboam is warned by Shemaiah, "the man of God," to desist from attempts at forcible union of the northern tribes, because the thing was "from the Lord" (1 Kings xii. 22—24). So did Jehu, the son of Hanani, denounce the sins of Baasha and foretell his fate (1 Kings xvi. 1—4, 7, 12). The contest of Elijah with Ahab, and the influence of Elisha on public affairs in his time, are not less remarkable than their general prophetic work, and the writer purposely shows how these men were as important factors in the history as the kings whose affairs they controlled. So we have the fearless Micaiah, son of Imlah, delivering an unpleasant "word of the Lord" to two powerful kings and in the face of the flattering testimony of a crowd of false prophets (1 Kings xxii. 5—8). Isaiah, the son of Amoz, in the reign of Hezekiah, occupies a far higher position as adviser to the king than any court official (2 Kings xix. 20—34, xx. 1—19); and Huldah, the prophetess, in the time of Josiah, when the law-book was found in the Temple, is resorted to for advice by priests and high officers of State (2 Kings xxii.

* The Books of Samuel, § 7, pp. 85, 86.

14 ff.). Besides these, whose public influence is more apparent, we have a reference to the prophetic activity of Jonah, son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher (2 Kings xiv. 25); and notices and words of unnamed prophets, as of the "man of God" who came out of Judah to Bethel, and cried against the altar of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii. 1—32); of others who assured Ahab of victory over Benhadad of Syria, and reproved him for not slaying his enemy (1 Kings xx. 12—15, 28, 35—43); and of the prophets who at Jerusalem foretold the ruin of the southern kingdom for the iniquities of Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 10—15).*

Some of the details regarding these prophetic men may, as has been already said, have been drawn from special compositions in which the lives and teaching of the prophets were recorded; but in the great majority of instances where the prophetic influence is exerted, the narrative of the historian would lose all its point and force, and reduce itself to the barest chronicle of events, if the prophets and their work did not appear in his pages. Even as it is, we know, by a comparison of the writings of prophetic men that have come down to us, that many events which here occupy little space and receive but slight notice, were pregnant with meaning for good or ill to Israel; and we require to read those writings along with the Books of Kings in order to obtain anything like an adequate conception of the history which is here briefly related.

6. *Standpoint.*—It is the prophetic tone which has just been alluded to that makes these books history, as distinguished from a bald chronicle. The historian leaves us in no doubt as to the spirit in which he treats his subject. His whole aim is to exhibit the course of events as so controlled by the Divine Hand, that faithfulness to God ensured blessing and unfaithfulness brought down His displeasure and led to national decline. Just as the writer of the Book of Judges sums up the period of which he treats in a comprehensive survey,† so the writer of the books before us is continually reminding his readers of his guiding principle, and now and then expands it into a general review of the whole cycle of events, from beginning to end, which he has set himself to relate. Passages of this kind are found in 2 Kings xvii. 7—23, 32—41; xxiii. 27. In such passages the writer

* It is somewhat remarkable that the prophet Jeremiah, who plays so important a part in the closing history of the kingdom of Judah, is not once mentioned in these books; and some would take this as an indication that he had a hand in their composition, according to the statement of the Talmud (see § 1). But it is hardly possible that he was the final editor, for by the time the work was completed he must have been, if still alive, of a very great age.

† See the Book of Judges, § 3, p. 70.

insists on the fact that it was because Israel forsook their God and walked in the statutes of the heathen that they lost their national independence.

Writing at a period when the influences, human and divine, which had moulded the history, had had time to show their developments, he holds these up to light in his pages, exhibiting at once what God had done for His people, and the manner in which they had requited His goodness. In the true spirit of prophecy he does not reprove the people for their neglect of outward ordinances nor insist on the ceremonial part of the law, but reproves them for forgetting the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt, for turning a deaf ear to the prophets, and for rejecting "His statutes and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them" (2 Kings xvii. 15).

This is the aspect in which the prophets always regard the law, as a fundamental principle underlying its specific observances; but though our author makes only such general allusions to the Mosaic law, neither he nor any other Old Testament writer gives any foundation for the idea of some modern writers that the law was nothing but the "instruction" of the prophets conveyed from time to time as occasion called it forth. He declares that the Lord testified "against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets" (2 Kings xvii. 13). In numerous passages there are such allusions to "statutes" and "judgments" and "commandments," the very terms which the Pentateuch itself employs, which can only refer to some code or codes which were sufficient to regulate the moral and religious life of the nation, and must have been known to the people whom the prophets addressed.

It is customary, among those who believe that the Book of Deuteronomy originated about the time of Josiah, * to say that the writer of the Books of Kings had his conceptions of the law coloured by the code which was the only one of any extent known in his day; and they point to the minuteness of detail which he exhibits in his description of the building of Solomon's Temple, and his palliation of the worship on the high-places before that time (1 Kings iii. 2), in proof that he attached great importance to a central sanctuary. But as it was not by any means impossible for Moses, at the beginning of the nation's history, to fore-

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 10, pp. 11, 12, and Deuteronomy, § 6, p. 55.

see the dangers to which Israel would be exposed from heathen worship in Canaan, and to guard against such dangers by legislation, so also it was but natural for a writer, living at the close of the nation's history, and seeing the havoc wrought by the idolatrous practices of evil times, to condemn in the severest terms the worship of the high-places and kindred heathen corruptions, which in both kingdoms had caused so much mischief.

To conclude that there was no ceremonial prescribed before the time of Solomon, and no recognised code of law beyond the Book of the Covenant up to the time of Josiah, is not warranted by anything stated in the Books of Kings, nor, it may be added, by the omission of anything which is not stated. It is self-evident that an orderly Temple service is necessary in a recognised Temple, and the very condemnation of the sacrifices of the heathen implies legalised and authoritative sacrifices. It is incredible that a writer should continually uphold the honour and dignity of a priesthood that had no prescribed functions, and blame the people for worship on the high-places if they knew no other worship to practise.

Whatever may have been the law-book that was found in the reign of Josiah (and, after all has been said, it is not proved that it was nothing but the Code of Deuteronomy), the writer of our books proceeds on the supposition that there was one central sanctuary from the time of Solomon at least. and implies that Israel was in possession of laws and ceremonies distinctly opposed to those of the nations around them. If he does not furnish us with details of the history of ritual worship, it is simply because this lay beyond the purpose he had before him, and was only remotely connected with his guiding principle.

7. *Credibility.*—As records of the history of the Israelite people during the time that they enjoyed national independence as a monarchy, these Books of Kings have their credibility amply attested by the records of neighbouring states, so far as these are available. The Moabite Stone, discovered in 1868, with an inscription of Mesha, king of that country, recording his successes, besides its interest as an early specimen of writing, had a special value in that it referred to events touched upon in the books before us (2 Kings iii. 4—27). Not only did it confirm the account there given of the relations subsisting between the Israelites and the Moabites, but it implied, and could only be rightly understood by assuming, the details which the Biblical writer communicates; so that, read along with the passage just referred to, and 2 Chron. xx., it enables us to construct an interesting history of the movements that took place at that time on the eastern borders of Palestine.

Of late years also we have gained an ever-increasing mass of materials, in the Assyrian inscriptions, to compare with the Hebrew records for the events that brought the great empire of the East upon the scene of the affairs of Israel and Judah. As these monuments have been from time to time brought to light and deciphered, they have not only confirmed the statements of the Old Testament writers, but have made clear many points which their brief narratives left in obscurity. It is interesting to note that on these inscriptions the kingdom of the ten tribes is almost uniformly spoken of as "the land of the house of Omri," Jehu himself being styled "son of Omri," showing, as the Moabite Stone also indicates, that that dynasty, the first of whom, according to 1 Kings xvi. 24, made Samaria the capital of the northern kingdom, enjoyed a high reputation among foreign peoples. More particularly, the successes and reverses of the kingdoms of Israel and Damascus, in their various collisions, which are only lightly touched on by the writer of the Books of Kings, are shown by these monuments to have been mainly influenced by alliances made by the one or the other with the great empire of the East, just as the same power also controlled the relations of Ahaz to his northern neighbours.*

In general, it may be said, that for the period preceding the fall of Samaria (B.C. 722) the Assyrian inscriptions largely supplement the slight notices of the Books of Kings, and for the succeeding period they are found to confirm in many minute details the accounts, which become fuller in these books and in the prophetical writings, on all subjects in which they are mutually concerned. It has, for example, been now definitely ascertained that Pul, mentioned in 2 Kings xv. 19 f., as to whose identity there was much doubt, is the same person, under a Babylonian name, as Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, and that he styles himself, on the monuments, "king of Babylon" as well as "king of Assyria."

This discovery has tended to reduce, to a certain extent, a wide divergence which at that point of the history existed between the Assyrian and the Hebrew dates; though it cannot be claimed that the difficulties in the chronology of the Biblical writers have been settled by the newer discoveries. Research has brought to light very complete lists of Assyrian rulers, after whom the years were reckoned; and from these and the so-called canon of Ptolemy (which mentions eclipses and other astronomical phenomena), a well-defined system of chronology has been computed, by which the exact dates of the notable events in Assyrian and Babylonian history are determined. On the other hand, the

* See *e.g.* 1 Kings xx.; 2 Kings x. 32—36; xv. 19, 20; xvi. 5—10, &c.

Books of Kings contain a system of chronology of their own, in which the dates of accession of the rulers of the one kingdom are fixed in relation to the contemporaneous reign in the other, and the length of the various reigns is stated.

On comparing the two systems it is found that, while they agree in the date for the fall of Samaria, they diverge more or less widely both before and after that event.* The differences cannot be explained on the supposition of errors in the copying of numbers in the manuscripts, but must be due to the mode of computation adopted by the Hebrew writer. In the first place, the system of reckoning the accession of a king of Israel from the year of the reign of the king of Judah, and *vice versâ*, is most probably to be ascribed to the last editor of the Books of Kings, for it was not likely to be found in the official annals of the respective kingdoms; and then it was no doubt based on earlier statements of the length of reigns, and so forth, which gave only approximate and round numbers.

According to the Hebrew reckoning the whole time intervening between the Exodus from Egypt and the return from the Babylonian Captivity fell into two nearly equal periods of about 480 years each, the building of the Temple (1 Kings vi. 1) representing the middle point; and the frequent recurrence of the number 40 both in the Books of Kings and in the Book of Judges †

* The divergences in regard to some of the more prominent events may be stated: the battle of Karkar, in which Ahab, in alliance with Benhadad of Syria (see 1 Kings xx. 34), was defeated, was, according to the monuments, fought in B.C. 854, whereas Ahab's reign, according to the Biblical chronology, extends from 918 to 897; Jehu, "the son of Omri," gives tribute to the Assyrian king while the latter wages war against Hazael of Damascus (see 2 Kings x. 32) in the year 842, though his reign on the Biblical chronology is given as 884—856; Menahem's tribute (2 Kings xv. 19) is recorded on the monuments in 738, but his reign on the Biblical reckoning extends from 771—761; and the invasion of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 13) is fixed by the monuments at 701, whereas, on the Hebrew mode of computation, it falls in 714.

† See the Book of Judges, § 2, end, p. 69. The reigns of David, Solomon, and Joash, are each given as 40 years. Stade maintains that the number 40 is artfully concealed in other cases. Thus the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijam together amount to 20 years, or half of 40; Asa reigns 41 years; the reigns from Jehoshaphat to Athaliah make up another 40; those of Amaziah and Uzziah combined give the number 81 or one more than twice 40; and from Jotham to the sixth year of Hezekiah (when Samaria was destroyed) is a period of 38, or two years less than 40, the deficiency being made up by the two additional years in preceding periods. Moreover, he says, the remainder of Hezekiah's reign, together with those of Manasseh and Amon, gives another 80 years. In the same way he finds 16 to be the base number for the reigns of the kings of Israel from Jehu to Hoshea, and 12 for the period preceding. But it would be easy to perform feats of that kind with any series of numbers.

makes it probable that it came to be customary to divide these two periods each into twelve parts of 40 years. That strict numerical accuracy was not aimed at is seen in the habit of stating a king's reign in complete years, of which we have a striking example in the case of David (2 Sam. v. 4, 5). Yet, while in this matter we ought to accept thankfully the aids furnished by the Assyrian inscriptions* towards a more precise chronology, the divergent system of the books before us does not detract from the substantial accuracy of the narrative, which finds striking confirmation from the same monuments.

8. *Brevity of the Narrative.*—It is but an outline after all that these books give of the history of the four centuries to which they relate. From the time of David, indeed, to the Exile, the nation of Israel lived its life as an independent, organized state, rising from the condition of a community of hardy tribesmen to the position of a powerful empire, and again disappearing from the scene of political affairs. In the northern kingdom, twenty kings, belonging to nine different dynasties, occupied the throne, while the southern kingdom, with its one dynasty of David, had a succession of nineteen kings from Rehoboam to its fall; yet we have but the scantiest record of the deeds of these rulers, and of the social, religious, and national changes that took place during their reigns. Many important events occurred which are only glanced at; many things which would have been of the deepest interest are passed by without mention; and our curiosity is only whetted by recurring references to lost records containing details which the author did not care to transfer to his pages. From hints dropped here and there, as well as from ancient monuments, we learn something of the part played by Israel and Judah on the broad theatre of the politics of the ancient world.

A series of writings from a succession of prophetical men who lived and taught during the period of the monarchy remains to cast much light on the political and religious movements in which they took part; and treasures of sacred song, from the time of David onwards, and compositions of a more speculative character, from the time of Solomon, have been preserved as evidences of the literary and mental activity of this long period. Old institutions must have been modified under altered circumstances; and there must have been a growth of ideas, an enlargement of views, a widening conception of their national calling on the part of the thinking men of the nation; but of all this the author of our books takes little note, leaving his readers to gather information from casual statements or from other works.

* Schrader, however, himself reminds us that these are not faultless, and require in detail to be handled critically.

It has been objected against him that in literary style he is even behind his predecessors, stiff and pedantic in his mode of representation, and so narrow and circumscribed in view that he measures everything by the ideas of his own late age. But, however it may be as to literary achievement, the author had his fixed view of the history, and, from his late standpoint, having seen the course which the history had run, he laid special stress upon the points on which it had turned. And we are bound to say that the experience of the world has confirmed his view. He does not lose himself in a multiplicity of details. It was of little moment to him that the proud house of Omri had raised the northern kingdom to greatness by brilliant deeds; a matter of comparative indifference to him that a king was rich and powerful, if he did not walk in the way that was right. In his brief, dry records of the doings and failings of the rulers of Israel and Judah, he has pointed out where the strength or weakness of a kingdom lies, and given us the most valuable lessons on political freedom. How many patriots and reformers, since his day, have been nerved to brave the fury of princes and do valiantly for the truth by the example of Old Testament prophets as set before them in these pages! And had the author of the Books of Kings done nothing more than this he had rendered incalculable service to the world.

His views may not be wide, but he does not deviate from his main position that a state stands secure only when it is founded on God's truth, and that it is preserved from danger only by His constant defence. He sees also, and the whole world has seen, that God had a special purpose in setting up the house of David at Jerusalem, and that His promise to that house did not fail of effect. The great empires of the East, with all their magnificence, have passed away and contributed but little to the world's good. The house of Omri perished and nearly involved the house of David in its fall; but the little kingdom of Judah, amid backslidings and shortcomings, was preserved till it was enabled to hand down to the world an enduring spiritual blessing. The fabric of an organized state held together till the seed of Divine truth had time to germinate and take deep root in the minds of those to whom it was revealed, and the decay of the outward state, and the failures of the best of human rulers, were the means by which these chosen ones were led to look for a kingdom which is not of this world.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

1. *Title and Place in the Canon.*—The name by which these two books are designated in the English Bible owes its suggestion to Jerome, who described them as "a chronicle of the whole of sacred history." After him, some editions of the Vulgate entitled the work "Chronicles," or "Book of Chronicles," and our translators adopted the name. It expresses pretty accurately the meaning of the title given in the Hebrew Bible, which is, literally, "The Acts," or "Affairs of the Times,"—*i.e.* journals or annals. This was the name given to those records, kept by officials of the kings, which contained an account of the notable events in each reign;* and it was natural, when books of history came to be written mainly out of materials drawn from such registers, that they would receive a similar name, although, of course, they would be less restricted in their compass and mode of treatment. The Greek translators of the Old Testament, however, were not satisfied with this general name, and designated these books *Paraleipomena*, meaning "things passed over" or "left out," from the idea that their author took up things which the writers of previous books had omitted or not fully related. This name, though aiming at greater precision, is not an accurate description of the books, as we shall presently see.

Like the Books of Samuel and Kings, the two Books of Chronicles originally constituted one work, the division into two being made by the Greek translators, although no doubt a pause of some kind existed in the original at the point where the division has been effected. The work is of late authorship. Besides many features in the original which show a decaying period of the language, we may observe that the mention of Cyrus (2 Chr. xxxvi. 22) and the tracing of the descendants of David to the sixth generation after Zerubbabel (1 Chr. iii. 19 ff.)

* See the Book of Kings, § 4, pp. 100, 101.

would bring the composition down to the close of the Persian or the early times of the Grecian domination.* It was for this reason that it was not included in the Hebrew canon among the *Former Prophets* or historical books, † but found a place among the Hagiographa, ‡ where it stands last among the books of the Hebrew Bible.

2. *Form and Plan.*—The first glance at the Books of Chronicles is sufficient to discover that these books are very different in form and conception from the historical books which precede them in the English Bible. Up to this point, the various books, from Genesis to Kings, had fitted into one another, so that one takes up the history where the preceding had dropped it, the whole giving a continuous history from the Creation to the Babylonian Captivity. The Books of Chronicles, however, beginning at Adam and coming down to the Restoration and, in its genealogical lists, to a period much later, seem to aim at giving in themselves a view of the whole period embraced in all these books put together. Yet they do not merely gather up details which had been omitted by previous writers, as the Septuagint translators imagined; for we find the repetition of many things which had formerly been narrated, and there are whole sections agreeing very closely in actual words with the Books of Kings.

A very slight examination shows also that, in literary form, the books present a striking contrast to those which immediately precede them. The author's predilection for genealogies and lists is very marked. He delights in tracing the ancestry of tribes and families and individuals back to the earliest times, and exhibits, in elaborate lists, the names and ranks of officials, the orders and functions of priests and Levites, and in general, the persons who held important offices or rendered special service. It will be noticed also that he concerns himself more with the religious than the political aspect of the history, and has much more to say about the outward observances of religion, the Temple and its ritual, the priests and their duties, than about the wars of the kings and the material prosperity of the people. And perhaps the most striking feature of the books that presents itself to the ordinary reader is the fact that the author deals almost exclusively with the history of the kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom is only alluded to when its affairs touch upon those of the southern, while the whole line of the kings of the house of David passes in review, and its descendants are

* For the connection with the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, see the chapters on those books, § 1, p. 120, and § 5, pp. 126, 127.

† See Joshua, § 1, p. 58, and the Books of Samuel, § 1, p. 77.

‡ See the Book of Esther, § 1, note *.

traced far down beyond the time of the Restoration. In following the history, also, it will be observed that he dwells at particular length and with evident fondness on those reigns that were distinguished by zeal for religion and reformation of worship, bestowing praise on faithful kings and censure on those who swerved into evil ways. All this will appear more clearly if we examine in some detail the contents of the books.

3. *Contents of First Book.*—The first book brings the history down to the death of David. It contains ten chapters of introductory matter, and nineteen chapters relating to the reign of David. The introductory portion is almost entirely in the form of genealogical lists, which, however, are not given as matters of mere antiquarian interest, but are so arranged as to show that the author is leading on to give a history of the kingdom of Judah. Thus the lists in chapters i. and ii., beginning with Adam, give the genealogies of Japheth, Ham, Shem, Abraham, Ishmael, Esau and the Edomite kings, Jacob, and end with the families of Judah; and these are followed (in chapter iii.) by the succession of the royal race of David, carried down presumably to the author's own time. In chapters iv. to viii. we have genealogical tables of the twelve tribes of Israel, but special fulness of detail is shown in regard to the tribe of Levi (chap. vi.) who served at the Temple, and the tribe of Benjamin (vii. 6—12; viii. 1—40), to which a great many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem belonged (viii. 28, 32 f.). From the eighth chapter onwards the author leaves collective Israel out of account, and confines himself to the kingdom of the south, proceeding, by means of lists of the families of Jerusalem (ix.1—34) and by a table of the genealogies of Saul and a brief notice of his fate (ix. 35—x. 14), to the main theme, the history of the royal house of David, with which the remaining chapters of the first book are concerned.

As, however, the main interest of the author centres in the religion and worship, David's reign at Hebron is passed over, and the scene is at once laid in Jerusalem. First there is an account of the election of the king by the elders at Hebron, of his consecration and anointing, and of the capture of Jerusalem (xi. 1—9); followed by lists of his heroes, his adherents before he came to the throne, and the crowds that assembled at Hebron to do him homage (xi. 10—xii. 40). Then comes an account of the removal of the ark from Kirjath-Jearim, and its temporary deposit in the house of Obed-Edom (xiii.), followed by details of the building of the royal palace, of the king's family, and a notice of his wars with the Philistines (xiv.). The formal removal of the ark to Jerusalem is narrated at length

(xv., xvi.), and David's purpose to build a temple is unfolded; but the execution of this work is postponed by prophetic advice, and a special blessing is pronounced on David and his descendants (xvii).

In chapters xviii. to xx. we have a summary of the wars that David waged with surrounding nations, with a list of his chief officers and high officials (xviii. 15—17). It is then related how David was induced to number the people, and in consequence a plague broke out among them; and how, on the occasion of a sacrifice offered at its discontinuance, the king received instructions as to the site of the future place of worship, and set about making preparations for its erection (xxi., xxii.). Here follow lists of the Levites and priests according to their courses and offices (xxiii—xxvi.), and similar lists of the divisions of the army, chiefs of the tribes, and royal functionaries (xxvii.). Then, at a public assembly held at Jerusalem, David in a formal manner makes arrangements for the succession of Solomon, charging him specially to persevere with the completion of the Temple (xxviii., xxix.), and having finished his work the king dies "in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour, and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."

4. *Contents of Second Book.*—The second book continues the history on the same principle, nine chapters being devoted to the reign of Solomon, and the rest to those of the succeeding kings. The author's predilection for all that pertains to the observances of religion shows itself again in his treatment of the reign of Solomon, six chapters being given to detailed descriptions of the various operations connected with the building and adornment of the Temple and provision for its services, and the solemn ceremonial observed at its dedication (ii.—vii.); while the arrangements made for the administration of the kingdom, and the account of the king's wealth and greatness, are comprised in two chapters (viii., ix.).

In what follows the writer gives, in chronological order, as in the Books of Kings, the successive reigns, confining himself, however, to the kingdom of Judah, and bestowing most attention on those reigns in which worship was properly observed, and religion flourished and Jerusalem prospered. He introduces the various prophetic men who appeared from time to time, especially when their message bears upon the observance of the national religion.

Thus we have an account of the reign of Rehoboam and the schism of the kingdom (x.—xii.), with the prophetic work of Ahijah the Shilonite (x. 15), and of Shemaiah "the man of God" (xi. 2, xii. 5); of Abijah and his victory over Jeroboam (xiii.);

and of Asa (xiv.—xvi.), with notices of the prophets Azariah the son of Oded (xv. 1), and Hanani "the seer" (xvi. 7). The reign of Jehoshaphat which follows is treated at greater length (xvii. 1—xxi. 1.). Here the author mentions the activity of various prophets (xviii. 7; xix. 2; xx. 14, 37), but dwells particularly on the arrangements made by the king for the instruction of the people in the law at the hands of priests and Levites, who "went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people" (xvii. 7—9), and similar provision made for the administration of justice in the various centres of Judah (xix. 5 ff.).

The reigns of Joram (xxi. 2—20), of Ahaziah, and Athaliah (xxii., xxiii.) are briefly treated, special mention being made of the preservation of the infant Joash; and his reign gives the writer the opportunity of recording the taxing that took place for the repair of the Temple and the supply of sacred vessels. It was also signalised by the murder of Zechariah, the son of the king's faithful adviser Jehoiada, because he lifted up his voice against the apostasy into which Judah was betrayed (xxiv.). Next come the reigns of Amaziah, who was rebuked for his idolatry, and suffered defeat at the hands of Joash of Israel (xxv.); of Uzziah, who usurped priestly functions and was smitten with leprosy (xxvi.); of Jotham (xxvii.); and of Ahaz (xxviii.), in whose time appeared the prophet Oded with a message to the army of Israel, which had obtained a victory over Judah (xxviii. 9 ff.).

The reign of Hezekiah presents the writer with congenial topics (xxix.—xxxii.); for we have accounts of the cleansing of the Temple and the purification of the Levites after the desecration that had happened in the closing years of Ahaz; of the observance by the whole nation of the Passover with joy, the like of which had not been known since the time of Solomon (xxx. 26); and of the ordinances made by the king for the support of the priests and Levites and the maintenance of the sanctuary (xxxi.). After the reign of Manasseh, with an account of his impiety, captivity, repentance, and restoration, and the brief reign of his son Amon (xxxiii.), the author comes to the reign of Josiah, which is again treated in fuller detail (xxxiv., xxxv.).

Here we have an account of the finding of the law-book in the Temple, the utterance of the prophetess Huldah, and the description of a celebration of a Passover such as had not been "kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet" (xxxv. 18). Finally, in the closing chapter (xxxvi.), he gives a brief history of the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jeconiachin, and

Zedekiah, a short statement of the deportation, and, in a broken sentence, taken up again in the opening verses of the Book of Ezra, a notice of the restoration from captivity.

5. *Sources.*—The sources from which the author of these books drew the materials for his work are in part mentioned by himself and in part may be inferred from the nature of the materials presented. First of all, he makes frequent reference to what seems to have been one work, though it is designated by him sometimes as the "Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chr. xvi. 11; xxv. 26; xxviii. 26; xxxii. 32), and sometimes as "the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah" (2 Chr. xxvii. 7; xxxv. 27; xxxvi. 8). It may be the same which in one place (2 Chr. xx. 34) is briefly called "the Book of the Kings of Israel," for by the time to which he then refers the kingdom of Israel in its limited sense had disappeared.

The work thus variously designated cannot have been the records to which the writer of the Books of Kings makes constant reference,* for these were the separate registers and state papers of the individual kingdoms, whereas the work here named was a combined account of the two. Nor can it have been our present canonical Books of Kings to which the writer of Chronicles referred; for the work in question is said to have contained the deeds of the monarchs "first and last," and *all* their wars and *all* their ways (2 Chr. xxvii. 7), and it is referred to for events and sayings which are not found in the Books of Kings. It would seem to have been a comprehensive work of a historical kind, relating to both Israel and Judah, and based no doubt on the respective annals of the two kingdoms.

That such historical works, of greater or less compass, had been produced before the author's time is in itself probable, and it may be to such a work that he refers for the reign of Joash, under the name of "the *story* of the Book of the Kings" (2 Chr. xxiv. 27), and to another, for the reign of Abijah, under the name of "the *story* of the prophet Iddo" (xiii. 22). At the same time we have to remember that the canonical Books of Samuel and Kings were in existence by the time the Books of Chronicles were written, and were doubtless employed by the author in writing his own history. The great similarity of his language to that of those books, in parts which treat of the same subjects, may arise from his having quoted either directly from them or from the sources which they had in common. We can see, moreover, from the manner in which events recorded in the earlier books are implied without being actually related by the chronicler,

* See the Books of Kings, § 4, pp. 100, 101.

that he assumed these histories to be known to his readers.* Secondly, we find several references to writings designated by the names of prophetical men, as Samuel, Gad, and Nathan (1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. ix. 29); Ahijah, Shemaiah, and Iddo (2 Chr. ix. 29; xii. 15); a writing of the prophet Isaiah relating to Uzziah (2 Chr. xxvi. 22), and apparently another in 2 Chr. xxxiii. 19.

From what is said in 2 Chr. xx. 34, and xxxii. 32 (*see* the Revised Version), it may be concluded that these writings, known by the names of their prophetical authors, were in some cases at least "inserted in the Book of the Kings," from which our author drew so largely, although it is quite probable that some of them were in circulation in separate form in his day. In addition to these compositions referred to by the writer himself, he must have had access to, and availed himself of, various registers, lists, and genealogies. Some of these, of a more national and public character, he no doubt found already incorporated in the historical work from which he drew so largely (*see* 1 Chr. ix. 1; xxvii. 24), while others, of a private or family description, would be the property of individuals or heads of tribes. Some of these documents seem to have been ancient and curious; for in the formal genealogical tables with which the work commences there are found not a few details for which we search in vain in the earlier books which cover the time to which they relate.

6. *Historical Value.*—It has been the fashion among a certain class of critics to speak disparagingly of the Books of the Chronicles, as if they had little or no independent historical value. It is variously alleged that the author of these books is only to be trusted when his statements are confirmed by other books, particularly by the Books of Kings; that what he has in common with preceding books is simply borrowed from them, and that all the rest is the product of late ideas, the misconception of the author's days; or even that he is guilty of deliberate falsification of history by means of fabricated lists of names and invented titles of books. Such accusations are both superficial and unjust. There is no reason to doubt the honesty of the author in the use of such materials as he had command of; nor is there any reason to question the existence of the writings to which he refers.

It is urged, indeed, that the writings in question, if they existed, were composed also at a late date, and were animated

* Compare, *e.g.*, 1 Sam. xxxi. 12, with 1 Chr. x. 12; 1 Kin. ix. 12, with 2 Chr. viii. 2; 1 Kin. iii. 1, with 2 Chr. viii. 11; 1 Kin. xi. 29—39, with 2 Chr. x. 15; 2 Kin. xviii. 3—6, with 2 Chr. xxx. 6, 7; 2 Kin. xx. 13—19, with 2 Chr. xxxii. 25, 31.

by the bias of a late time, and that therefore anything based upon them can have no historical value; that, in short, by the time of the chronicler there were no original and trustworthy documents in existence that had not in substance been worked into earlier books of the canon. But all this is mere assertion. We know from the author of the Books of Kings himself that there were many things within his reach in written documents which he did not transfer to his pages; and it is evident on the face of his books that they do not by any means give a complete account of the history of the centuries to which they relate.

As to discrepancies which are to be found between the Books of Chronicles and Kings, a great many of them are differences in names, numbers, and individual expressions, which may be accounted for on the supposition that the text of one or other of the books has not been correctly handed down. For the rest, the variations are such as might appear in two independent works, or may be attributed to the different standpoints and aims of the writers; at all events, they do not warrant the sweeping charges that are brought against the writer of the books under consideration. It is quite clear that he had a special fondness for dwelling on all that pertained to the strict observance of the Temple worship, and a special purpose in relating throughout his work how the good kings attended to the orderly arrangements of all matters of religion. But if he thought fit to dwell on these things at greater length than the writer of the Books of the Kings had done, this is no reason for doubting his accuracy, any more than his omission of things which the other recorded is a reason for concluding that he did not know of these things. And if, in his narrative, he gives prominence to matters of ritual observance and priestly activity in the early monarchical period, and thus causes inconvenience to the theory of the late origin of the Levitical system, his statements are not on that account to be put aside as due to false conceptions of the ancient history, and therefore unworthy of credence.

A charge of falsifying history should not be made without very clear proof, and it is suspicious that it is brought precisely against those books which do not square with certain notions of the development of Israel's history. At the same time, it is to be remembered that no writer can divest himself of the ideas of his age, nor can his work be understood apart from his circumstances and training. There were good reasons why the writer of the Chronicles laid stress on certain aspects of the history of his nation; and it may be granted that he read the record of the past in the light of his own time, reproducing in his own manner

the speeches of former ages, and freely handling his materials in a way that best suited the plan of his work. But when all this is admitted, we have done nothing to impugn his veracity or to detract from the substantial accuracy of his work, the main purpose of which was to present a particular aspect of the history of his nation, which had not been brought into prominence by former writers, but was regarded by him as of special value to the people of his own time.

7. *Standpoint.*—We must have regard to the period at which the writer of these books lived, and the circumstances of the people for whom he wrote, if we would understand the form in which they appear and the object for which they were composed. The national independence of Israel was a thing of the past, but the descendants of David, to whom had been given the promise of a sure house, survived. The Captivity had done its work; the exiles, thoroughly cured of the old tendency to idolatry, had been allowed to gather on their ancestral soil, to erect a temple on the ruins of that of Solomon, and to observe the rites of their national religion. The voice of prophecy had become silent; the two precious possessions that survived the Exile and bound the present to the past were the exercise of their religion and the offspring of David; round these clustered the hopes of the future, at a time when restored Israel was at the mercy of a heathen power for corporate existence and the semblance of national life.

At such a time and in such circumstances an author, taking a review of the past history of his nation, saw everything in a peculiar light, and would approach his work with a peculiar purpose. It had become a settled conviction that Israel had suffered for unfaithfulness in the matter of religion; and, as the forms of religion were more punctiliously observed after the Captivity, our author would look for the reigns in which these received due attention and dwell upon them as "the good old times" of the nation's life, while he would perceive and emphasise the fact that it was when these were neglected that the unfaithful kings had suffered. From this point of view he set himself the task of writing the whole history of his nation, so as to sustain the courage of his people in their depressed condition, and give them guidance and hope for the future. The encouragement was, that so long as the community, deprived though they were of their old political independence, adhered to the observances of their national religion, they would be preserved from mingling among the nations and being lost; and the hope was, that if they so remained steadfast to the covenant, the God of their

fathers would remember "the sure mercies of David," and would, in His good time, "restore the kingdom to Israel."

Such a book, in short, would contribute not a little to keep alive the persistent separate existence of the Jewish race, which is one of the most striking features of history, and to stamp upon their later religious life the character which it retained for the succeeding centuries. The book was at once the result of the new impulse that had been given to the observance of the law at the time of Ezra,* and at the same time would tend to foster the same adherence to the forms of worship as the sole remaining bond of Israel's union and the mark of their separation from the heathen nations. And, if the tendency seems to us a falling away and a decay as compared with the earlier prophetic period, we are not to forget that it was only the natural hardening of the husk, after the bloom had disappeared, around the living seed which, after centuries of apparent death, was to burst forth into new and higher life.

* See the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, § 7, p. 129.

THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

1. *Titles and Place in the Canon.*—These two books go naturally together. The men whose names they bear were contemporaries, and some of the most valuable information we possess in regard to Ezra is contained in the Book of Nehemiah. In the Talmud, indeed, and by Josephus and the early Church fathers, the two books are reckoned as one, called the Book of Ezra, although it is usually spoken of as consisting of two parts, called First and Second Ezra. In the Hebrew canon the two books are put separately, yet they are reckoned as forming only *one* of the twenty-four books into which the whole Old Testament is divided,* and the Masoretic conclusion which is usually appended to each book comes at the close of Nehemiah.

The explanation of this varying treatment of the books, according to which they were first regarded as one, then separated into two, and finally designated by two separate names, is no doubt due, as it has been expressed, to an "unconscious criticism." It was perceived that the books, referring to the same time and situation, had so far a common origin, and yet they presented features which led to the appreciation of dual authorship. The hands of both Ezra and Nehemiah, in short, are discernible in the respective compositions, although a common influence is discernible in the reducing of them to the state in which they now appear before us.

In the Hebrew Bible the books are placed together after Daniel and before Chronicles, an arrangement which has been variously explained. In that position, as it will be perceived, the books before us continue the story of the Captivity contained in Daniel and give an account of the restoration; the Books of Chronicles then following as a complete summary of the history

* See the Book of Esther, § 1, note*, p. 131.

from the earliest times till the eve of the return from captivity. In our English Bible, however, Ezra and Nehemiah follow Chronicles, and can be read as a sequel to the history of these books.

It will be observed that the closing verses of Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23) are almost identical with the opening words of Ezra—a feature which has led many to believe that the works originally formed one continuous composition, and which, at all events, shows that the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were recognised as forming a natural continuation of the history of the Chronicles. Those books had brought down the history to the first year of Cyrus, and the books before us contain the history of the re-establishment of the Israelite society by the return of colonists, their settlement in Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the Temple and city, and the reorganisation of life and worship.

The narrative begins in the Book of Ezra at the first year of the reign of Cyrus, B.C. 538, and it is dropped in Nehemiah soon after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, B.C. 432; so that the two books together carry us over a space of about a century. The whole history of this time, however, falls into three clearly defined periods. The first, treated of in the first six chapters of Ezra, is the time that elapsed from the first return of exiles to the completion of the Temple; the second, of which an account is contained in the remaining chapters of Ezra, is the period of his activity as leader of the second colony that came to Judæa; and the third, covered by the Book of Nehemiah, is the period of the activity of the two men in the reconstitution of the new community at Jerusalem. It will be convenient to speak of these three periods separately.

2. *First Period.*—The *first* period extends over twenty-three years, viz. from the first return of exiles in 538 till the completion of the Temple in the sixth year of Darius B.C. 515. The whole of this period was anterior to the coming of Ezra, and chapters i.—vi. of his book contain a succinct account of what was an arduous and almost hopeless struggle on the part of the first colonists to establish themselves in the city of their fathers. From the Books of Haggai and Zechariah, who belonged to that period, we gain much additional light on that troubled time; and the condition of the great empire under whose protection the colonists effected a settlement, as it is known to us from history, enables us to understand many things which are but lightly touched upon in the canonical books.

What we learn from the Book of Ezra is that Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, gave permission to as many of the Israelite exiles as were so disposed to return and settle in their native

land; that persons from the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, as well as Nethinim, or Temple servants, to the number of 42,360 (or, if this number stands for heads of families, about 200,000 in all), set out under Zerubbabel or Sheshbazzar (compare Ezra i. 8, ii. 2, and v. 14), to whom, by the king's command, were delivered the sacred vessels of the Temple, which had been carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra i., ii.). The exiles were accompanied by Joshua, the high priest; and, in the seventh month of the year of their return, they set up an altar for burnt offering and celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles.

From that time onwards the observance of the prescribed rites of their religion was maintained; but it was not till the second year that the foundations of the Temple were laid, amid the joyful shouts of the younger colonists and the weeping of older men who had seen the former Temple (chapter iii.). Their work, however, was not allowed to proceed in peace. "The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," that is to say, the inhabitants of Samaria, a mixed people who had been settled in the old territory of the kingdom of the ten tribes,* approached Zerubbabel and his colonists, asking to have a share in the building of the Temple, seeing that they also had been worshippers of the same God from the days of Esar-haddon. Their offers were rejected, and from that time began the bitter hostility of the Samaritans to the Jews, which lasted down to New Testament times (John iv. 9). The Samaritans had many opportunities of venting their hatred. Their own city, Samaria, was by that time a place of some importance, with a Persian governor, through whom they could send reports to headquarters, representing in a bad light the intentions of the Jews in setting up their Temple at Jerusalem; they could, moreover, encourage the marauding Arabs of the neighbourhood to engage in petty annoyances or warlike attacks on the infant colony. In one way or another they impeded the progress of the work till the reign of Darius (Ezra iv. 1—5).

Between the death of Cyrus and the accession of Darius there intervened a space of about eight years, represented by the reign of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, and the brief usurpation of the so-called Pseudo-Smerdis. Some have thought that these are the kings referred to in Ezra iv. 6, 7, under the names of Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. It is pretty certain, however, that the names stand for Xerxes I. and Artaxerxes I., who were the *successors* of Darius, and that the verses 6—23 do not follow the preceding narrative in strictly chronological order, but were sug-

* See 2 Kings xvii. 24—41, written, it will be remembered, at least not earlier than the closing days of the old kingdom of Judah, and possibly even after the Captivity. Compare Kings, § 1, p. 92.

gested to the author (or editor) by the subject in hand. Having stated that the opposition lasted till the time of Darius, he adds that it was continued even later, and proceeds to give instances of how it manifested itself; but in verse 24 he returns to the point to which he had come, at which a temporary change in the circumstances of the colony took place.* In the second year of Darius, he proceeds to say, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah urged the people to a more vigorous prosecution of the work; and under their impulse the building was resumed.

It was a time when the great Persian empire was shaken to its base, and Darius was making tremendous efforts to retain the sovereignty over revolted provinces; and it may have been thought that, at such a time, the king's attention would not be turned to the operations of the little colony at Jerusalem, and that the work would be allowed to proceed in peace. But the enemies of Judah were on the watch; and no doubt it was at their instigation that Tattenai, the Persian satrap of Syria, demanded from the Jews a proof of the authority by which they were carrying on their work. The Jews referred him to the edict of Cyrus; and while correspondence was going on between him and the court of Darius to verify their statement, we may believe they would continue to push on the work of building (chapter v.). At all events, Darius, now at rest from his enemies, made search for the old edict, found it, and confirmed it, giving orders to his governors to aid the Jews in their work. And thus, in the sixth year of his reign, the Temple was finished, a joyful feast was held at the dedication, and the Passover was observed in the same month (chapter vi.).

3. *Second Period.*—The *second* period begins with the seventh chapter of Ezra, and extends to the close of the book. These chapters will tell us how Ezra brought the second colony from Babylon and settled them in Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes I., called Longimanus, *i.e.* in the year B.C. 458 (Ezra vii. 8). Since the former period ended with the sixth year of Darius, or 515, and this begins with the seventh year of Artaxerxes, there is thus an interval of fifty-seven years passed over without record. This space represents the remaining thirty years of Darius, the twenty years' reign of Xerxes, and the opening seven years of that of Artaxerxes. As has been stated in the last paragraph, the passage Ezra iv. 6—23 is best explained as referring to this interval. Verse 6 simply says that, in the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the Jews, but the verses that follow

* Observe that, on this view, the verse Ezra vi. 14 must also be regarded as an anticipation of the succeeding history.

give at length a correspondence that took place "in the days of Artaxerxes" between the local governors* and the court of Persia. The complaint then made was that the Jews were "building the rebellious city and had finished the walls," the insinuation being that they were aiming at independence; and the result of the correspondence was that the works were stopped till a positive decree should be issued on the subject.

We may either place the episode before the arrival of Ezra, and suppose that the exiles, taking encouragement in the early years of Artaxerxes, pushed on the work, and that the decree referred to was a favourable one, and was virtually the commission to Ezra himself. Or we may put it down later than Ezra's arrival, in which case it would be the reforming impulse which he gave which led to the intervention of the adversaries, and the stoppage would have occurred some time before the arrival of Nehemiah. For it is to be remembered that though Ezra reached Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and Nehemiah does not appear till the twentieth year of the same reign, all the events recorded in Ezra viii.—x. in connection with his coming seem to have occurred in the space of a few months; so that for nearly thirteen years Ezra disappears from the narrative, although he may have been present at Jerusalem.

However this may be, it was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes that he obtained permission to lead a second colony, and was not only provided with such free-will offerings as the Jews might contribute, but received also a gift from the royal treasury, and orders to local governors to give him every support (vii.). Collecting his volunteers at the river Ahava, he discovered that there were no Levites among them, and persuaded some from Casiphia to accompany him; and then, after solemn fasting and prayer, set out on his journey. Though the condition of the empire rendered travelling dangerous, Ezra had no armed escort, having been ashamed to ask such protection after confidently saying to the king that the hand of God would be upon them for good. The journey occupied four months, and the caravan reached Jerusalem in safety (Ezra viii. 1—32; comp. vii. 8—10).

Delivering his credentials to the governors and handing to the priests the offerings for the house of God (viii. 33—36), Ezra proceeded to execute the charge entrusted to him, "to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of thy

* Mithredath and Tabeel were probably the Persian satrap of Syria and his secretary, and Rehum and Shimshai the governor of Samaria and his secretary. The accusation would be stronger when presented by the two parties. The name Bishlam is uncertain; the Septuagint and Syrian versions translate the word "in peace."

God which is in thine hand" (vii. 14). The condition of matters was even worse than he had expected, for when he heard that the people, and even the priests and Levites, had contracted mixed marriages and conformed to heathen customs, he "sat down astonied till the evening sacrifice" (ix. 1—3). He then rose and, in the hearing of the people, poured out a touching confession of the sins of the nation (ix. 5—15); which so moved the hearts of the people that some of the leaders entreated him to take measures for cleansing the community, binding themselves by oath to put away their heathen wives. An assembly was convened in the cold, rainy weather of November, at which it was agreed that a commission should search out all the cases of trespass, and in two months they had completed their task (x. 1—17). The Book of Ezra closes abruptly with a list of those who had offended and who pledged themselves to put away their strange wives (x. 18—44).

4. *Third Period.*—Thirteen years after the arrival of Ezra's colony Nehemiah appears at Jerusalem; and the *third* period, treated of in the Book of Nehemiah, and extending over twelve years, is the period of their joint activity. In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, cup-bearer to the king, having heard mournful accounts of the condition of his countrymen in Judea (chapter i.), obtained leave of absence from the court, and was appointed governor of Jerusalem. He travelled with a royal escort and was provided with letters to officials by the way, as well as orders to the keeper of the royal parks to furnish him with timber for building purposes; all of which gave great displeasure to the unfriendly neighbours of the Jews, Sanballat, the Samaritan governor, and his secretary Tobiah (ii. 1—10). Unmoved by the contempt of these men, Nehemiah, as soon as he had made an inspection of the ruins, took in hand the repair of the walls, dividing the work among the various chiefs and guilds, who vigorously lent their aid (ii. 11—iii. 32).

The adversaries, seeing the progress of the work, planned an attack upon the city by the help of the Ammonites and Arabians; but, by keeping his men under arms and labouring incessantly, Nehemiah was able to proceed without interruption (iv.). At the same time he attended to the wants of the poor, and made great sacrifices on their behalf (v.). The walls were completed in fifty-two days, and then Sanballat and his associates laid various snares to entrap the governor, being aided in their designs by certain false prophets in Jerusalem itself. All these machinations Nehemiah eluded (vi.), and, having seen his work completed, he appointed faithful men over the city with special instructions to keep the gates (vi. 1—5). About a week after

this, in the beginning of the seventh month, Ezra again appears.

At a great public assembly he reads the law to the people, being supported on the right and left by priests, and attended by Levites who explain what is read, the service being continued from early morn till mid-day, and the day observed as a time of holy joy (viii. 1—12). This was followed by a great observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, during the continuance of which there was a similar daily reading of the law (viii. 13—18); and then "the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers" (ix. 1—3), and bound themselves by a solemn covenant to keep the law, and particularly to abstain from mixed marriages, to sanctify the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbatical year, and to tax themselves for the maintenance of the Temple worship (ix. 4—x. 39). Measures were then taken for gathering into the city a sufficient population from the surrounding country (xi.), and the completed walls were dedicated by a solemn procession (xii.). Nehemiah, however, was recalled to the court of Persia in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes (xiii. 6), and returning after an absence of some undefined time, found that the old abuses had again crept in, the chief offender being the high priest himself, whose name is significantly absent from the list of those who had signed the covenant twelve years before (x. 1—28).

It appears that he was related by marriage to Sanballat (xiii. 28), and that he had actually assigned to Tobiah, Sanballat's associate, a chamber in the Temple which should have been appropriated to sacred purposes. The governor, enraged at the profanation, cast forth the household stuff of Tobiah, cleansed the chamber, recalled the Levites who had been driven to live on their lands outside the city, and appointed treasurers to look after the payment of tithes in future (xiii. 1—14). The book comes to rather an abrupt close while Nehemiah is still engaged in such works of reformation, its last words being his oft-repeated prayer: "Remember me, O my God, for good" (xiii. 23—31).

5. *Literary Features.*—Looked at as literary compositions these books present features which prove they could not, in their present form, have been written by the men whose names they bear. Certain portions of both books are written in the first person,* Ezra and Nehemiah being presumably the authors, while in other parts these men are spoken of in the third person, as if by another writer. Since the narrative in Ezra begins at a point some eighty years before his arrival in Jerusalem, if Ezra

* Viz. Ezra vii. 27—ix. 15; Nehemiah i.—vii.; xii. 27—43; xiii. 4—31.

composed it, he must have depended upon written materials for his information, and it will be observed that about two-thirds of the section i.—vi. is made up of official lists and state documents.

Again in the Book of Nehemiah, while he obviously is the author of the opening and closing portions, and while some of the lists may have been drawn up by himself or in his own days, other lists are older (as that given in vii. 6—73, which is a duplicate of Ezra ii. 2—70), and some come down to a period long posterior to Nehemiah. In chapter xii. 26, the times of Ezra and Nehemiah are spoken of as past; in xii. 10, 11, the lists of high priests is brought down to Jaddua, who, according to Josephus, was a contemporary of Alexander the Great, in other words, was about a century later than Nehemiah; and verse 22 of the same chapter, referring to the same time, names Darius *the Persian*, as if by that time the Persian empire had passed away, the king referred to being most probably Darius Codomannus, the last Persian king (B.C. 336—331). The last writer who touched the books, therefore, whether he only introduced the brief notices that have been instanced, or made a more extensive compilation, must have lived as late as the time of the Greek domination. He may have been the same person who composed the Books of Chronicles, which are later in date than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.*

Many indeed hold that the three books, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, constituted originally one large work, and in proof of this it is pointed out that Chronicles has no proper termination, but breaks off in the middle of a sentence, which is completed in Ezra. But, on the other hand, it may be maintained that the verses common to the two books stand more naturally at the opening of Ezra, and that their presence in Chronicles is more intelligible on the supposition that the Book of Ezra already existed. Moreover, the advocates of this theory can give no satisfactory account of the separation of the large work into three, and the inversion of the parts into what is not a chronological order. Further, there are repetitions in the books which are scarcely consistent with the idea that they once formed a whole. Thus the list in Ezra ii. 2—70, is repeated in Nehemiah vii. 6—73, and the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem after the restoration, which has its natural place in Nehemiah xi., is found also, with variations such as the same author would hardly have introduced, in 1 Chron. ix.

On the whole it seems most natural to suppose that materials

* See the Books of Chronicles, § 1, p. 110, and § 7, p. 118.

from the hands of Ezra and Nehemiah respectively formed a nucleus, around which the two books which have come to bear their names grew into their present form, and it may have been the author of the Books of Chronicles who gave them their definite shape.

6. *The New Reform.*—Little as we are told of the personal histories of Ezra and Nehemiah, we perceive that they were eminently fitted for the crisis in which they appeared. It is evident that the efforts of the first colony under Zerubbabel and Joshua sufficed at most to preserve a lingering existence. It was only after the arrival of Ezra that the restored community took a new departure, and only by the energetic action of Nehemiah that it assumed a position in which it was able to unfold, under new conditions, its old religious life. It has been conjectured that probably the influence of Esther and Mordecai on Xerxes, the predecessor of Artaxerxes,* may account for Jews being in such high regard at the court.

It is clear that both Ezra and Nehemiah were in high estimation with the king, or they would not have been entrusted with the functions they were sent to perform; and it was providential that, at a time when the first colony was struggling for existence, these two men, of the seed of Israel, were raised up to guide their nation through a trying time and give it a constitution which would survive the successive dynasties under which the Jewish people lived. Ezra, a scribe, instructed in the law of Moses, was able to expound the principles of the religion, and to show their application to daily life: Nehemiah, endued with full powers from the king, was a man of determined will, fertility of resource, and devotion to his people. And thus, at a crisis which became a reformation in Israel, the leaders possessed the intelligent conception of the thing needed, and the administrative capacity to effect it, without which no reformation can be brought about.

So it is from this period that a new era in the life of the Jewish people is dated, and tradition assigns to Ezra a place next to Moses in the moulding of the religious life. The national unity was saved from being shattered into fragments by the Captivity; for the Temple with its service was the religious centre to which in all places of their wanderings the dispersed ever turned. Even though many remained in Babylon, and entered upon a new religious and intellectual career in the famous schools which arose there, though others in other lands fell under the spell of the Greek philosophy, yet in all places of their dis-

* See the Book of Esther, § 2, p. 132.

persion they looked to Jerusalem as their metropolis, and all their mental activity had one starting point, and can be traced to the movement inaugurated by Ezra.

7. *Restoration of the Law.*—In an account of the great gathering in the seventh month, contained in Nehemiah viii., ix., the thing that is most remarkable is the extraordinary desire of the people to become acquainted with the books which the scribe read in their hearing. We see Ezra attended by a number of men who, like himself, must have given special study to the law, for they "caused the people to understand" (viii. 7); and for three hours on end the people stood listening to the reading, and for as many hours more engaged in worship (ix. 3). As at the Reformation in Europe preaching became a distinctive feature of the new religious life, so here for the first time a pulpit is mentioned (viii. 4), and the regular exposition of Scripture commences. It is this prominence given to Scripture that distinguishes the reform of Ezra, and accounts for the high honour assigned to him in later tradition.

Whatever may be the amount of truth underlying the tradition which calls him the restorer of the law, it is clear that from this time a special value was set upon the sacred writings, and that the study of Scripture and the work of the "Scribe" became new features in the religious history. It was a necessity of the time that, of all the sacred writings, the "law," prescribing a regular ritual of worship, and requiring a distinctive life, should receive special attention at the crisis when a sharp separation had to be drawn between the colony at Jerusalem and the surrounding heathen. And, since the maintaining of that separation was a continuous and arduous process, and, in the absence of national independence, the religious observances of the law became the visible mark of the separation, it came to pass naturally that Legalism and Rabbinism ultimately set in, giving to Judaism the hardness and formalism which it presented, till such time as the world was ready for the free dissemination of the truth of which the nation was the depository. But, while the impulse towards Legalism was thus given in the movement inaugurated by Ezra, there is nothing in the books under consideration to warrant the conclusion of advanced critics that the Book of the Law from which he read was in any proper sense his own composition, or that he was the author of the Levitical Code.

Those colonists did not leave comfortable homes in Babylon to set up a Temple at Jerusalem whose ritual had, in their estimation, anything short of a Divine sanction. Ezra brings forth the book, and the people receive it, as the law of Moses, the ancient constitution of the nation which they had sacrificed so

much to restore; and the modern theory gives no adequate explanation of this deeply-rooted national belief. Ezra is a restorer, not an innovator. And although the high regard to Scripture which he inaugurated degenerated into a slavish worship of the letter, and the attention to the legal element ran into extravagance, it is the great merit of him and his associates that, at a critical time, they preserved the ancient writings which show how from earliest times the people of Israel had been the channel of the revelation of God's will to mankind, and rallied around these writings the wondrous people that has been from age to age the witness of God's truth to the world.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

1. *Title and Place in the Canon.*—The Book of Esther stands in the English Bible at the close of the historical books; it does not, however, form a link in the connected series, as it only relates to an episode in the history. It has, moreover, features of its own which distinguish it broadly from the historical books, and indeed from all the other books of the Old Testament. It takes its name from the Jewish maiden who became queen of the Persian king Ahasuerus, and it was written doubtless with the primary purpose of explaining the institution of the feast of Purim, which originated mainly through her means. In the Hebrew Bible it stands among the Hagiographa, the third division of the canonical books, as one of the five rolls,* and by the later Jews has come to be esteemed almost as highly as the law itself.

Its authorship and date are unknown; but from the indication in the first verse of the time at which the events to be narrated took place, we may conclude that it could not have been written till a considerable time after the close of the reign of Ahasuerus. This king is now generally believed to have been Xerxes (named

* The number of books in the Old Testament is reckoned by the Jews as twenty-four, divided into three collections, Law, Prophets, and (Sacred) Writings or Hagiographa. The number twenty-four is made up as follows:—

I.	The law, viz., Genesis to Deuteronomy . .	5 books
II.	The *former* prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings	4 ,,
	The *latter* prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets counted as one	4 ,,
III.	The three so-called poetical books—Psalms, Proverbs, Job	3 ,,
	The five rolls—Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther	5 ,,
	The three books, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles	3 ,,
	In all . . .	24 ,,

in the Persian inscriptions Kshyarsha), who succeeded Darius on the throne of Persia in 485 B.C., and reigned twenty years.* The composition of the book may with some probability be placed not earlier at least than that of the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, *i.e.* towards the close of the Persian or in the early part of the Greek domination.†

2. *Contents.*—Though attempts have been made to resolve the Book of Esther into different constituent parts, it presents itself most naturally as one composition. It is graphic in its delineation of details, and the plot of the story is unfolded with almost dramatic vividness. Ahasuerus, the powerful king of Persia, at a great feast in the third year of his reign, being heated with wine and elated with pride, repudiates his queen Vashti for refusing to obey his foolish command; and in the seventh year of his reign the orphan Jewess Hadassah (*Myrtle*), who had been brought up by her kinsman Mordecai, a Benjamite, is chosen for her beauty and demeanour to take the place of the repudiated queen, receiving apparently the Persian name Esther (*Star*).

Mordecai, who may have been in court employment, and had rendered special service to the state by the discovery of a plot against the king's life, wounds the pride of Haman, the king's minister and favourite, by refusing to stand up and do him honour in the king's gate. At this Haman conceives a bitter hatred for the whole race of the Jews, and forms a plan for their extermination. Finding, by the employment of the lot (*pur*), an auspicious day for the accomplishment of his purpose, he prevails upon the king to issue an edict that, in all parts of his dominions, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, or Adar, the whole race of the Jews, "both young and old, little children and women," should be put to death. Mordecai communicates intelligence of the plot to Esther, imploring her to use her influence with the king to save her people from destruction. She resolves to risk her life in the attempt, and prepares for the execution of her purpose by a fast, in which the Jews of Susa, the capital, join her.

Venturing into the royal presence she invites the king and Haman to a banquet, at which, being pressed by the king to prefer her request, she invites them to another banquet on the following day. Haman goes home boasting to his friends of the honour done to him, and, confident of the success of his scheme, prepares a gallows for the execution of Mordecai. The same night, however, the king, unable to sleep, has the registers of the kingdom read to him, and is reminded of the former service

* See Ezra and Nehemiah, §§ 2, 3, pp. 121—5.

† Chronicles, § 1, p. 110; Ezra and Nehemiah, § 5, pp. 126, 127.

of Mordecai, which had never been publicly acknowledged. Next day, when Haman presents himself, the king, still thinking of Mordecai's service, puts the question, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour?" and Haman, flattering himself that a distinction is to be conferred on himself, suggests a pompous procession and a royal proclamation. To his mortification he is ordered to carry out his own programme in honour of Mordecai; and, coming in to the banquet after his degrading task, he is denounced by Esther as the enemy of her people, and is immediately hurried away to be executed on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.

An edict is then despatched, empowering the Jews, in all places of the empire, to stand for their defence on the day appointed for their massacre; and on that day, and in Susa the capital on the succeeding day also, they take up arms and inflict a bloody vengeance on their enemies, celebrating their success in a general rejoicing. Thus, it is explained, originated the feast of Purim, or *lots*, to commemorate the deliverance of the Jewish nation from the ruin which Haman had cast lots to compass; and Esther and Mordecai ordained that besides the two days of rejoicing, a day of fasting and mourning should be observed as part of the celebration.

3. *Historical Character.*—The truth of the story told in this Book of Esther is attested by the subsistence of the feast of Purim among the Jews to the present day. Without some such great national occurrence as is here related, the introduction of such a feast and its observance by the whole race cannot be explained. In the Second Book of Maccabees it is already spoken of as "the day of Mordecai," and Josephus also refers to it. No other satisfactory account can be given of its origin than that contained in this book; and the appeal of the writer to the "book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia" (x. 2) implies that the occurrence was one of public notoriety.

It has been objected that the narrative contains historical improbabilities, and that the writer betrays ignorance of the customs of the Persian court; but in these respects the credibility of the writer is confirmed and not shaken by more perfect knowledge. The time at which the events are said to have occurred was eminently opportune; for the great gathering of princes and nobles at Susa in the third year of the reign of Xerxes would agree with the mustering of his forces before undertaking the war with Greece, and the blank that is left till his seventh year covers the time of that disastrous expedition. All that is here related of Ahasuerus is in keeping with his character as described in history. He was capricious in temper, extravagant in his

habits, overweening in pride, and much under the influence of court favourites, male and female.

From Persian authors nothing can be learned regarding this king's life after the sixth year of his reign, and Greek writers who treat of his times concern themselves with the public events bearing on the history of their own country; so that the Book of Esther, giving a glimpse of his domestic life, does not receive direct confirmation from these sources. The details which it furnishes are, however, in keeping with all that we otherwise know; and the minute carefulness in such matters as lists of names, and the accuracy of the particulars as to the usages of the court of Persia are proof that the writer was not drawing upon his fancy, and are in marked contrast with the inaccuracies of certain of the apocryphal books. Though, of course, we must recognise the spirit of a Jewish writer in recording the signal deliverance of his nation, there is, on the whole, no reason to doubt the accuracy of the account which he gives of the occurrences.

4. *Religious Significance.*—A book which has for its object to record the triumph of the Jewish people over their heathen enemies was bound to be received by them with unusual favour. There were not wanting those among them at an early time who discountenanced the spirit in which the feast of Purim was observed, and presumably objected to the tendency of the book; yet the people, as a whole, becoming more exclusive as their separation from the world became more marked, magnified the feast and gave corresponding respect to the book which relates its institution.

But in proportion as the Jews esteemed the Book of Esther, and for the very reasons that enhanced its value in their esteem, Christian writers depreciated it, and hesitated to accept it as part of canonical Scripture. Luther plainly gave it as his opinion that it would be better excluded from the Canon, and said of it and the Second Book of Maccabees that he would gladly wish they had never been written. The objection taken by him and others to the book is that it *judaizes* too much, some even say that it breathes a spirit of pride and revenge. There is no doubt that the tone of the book is very different from that of the older Hebrew writings, and little is said of the Divine providence in the events recorded. The king of Persia is mentioned some one hundred and eighty-seven times, while, as has been often remarked, the name of God does not once occur.

On the other hand, there are valuable moral lessons in the book; the conduct of Esther and Mordecai would be inexplicable without a belief on their part in God's providence, and a reliance on His power and faithfulness; and the cause of the quarrel

between Haman and Mordecai was the scrupulous regard of the latter for his own religion. We are not to expect the high spirit of Christianity in a book written at the time and amid the circumstances in which the Book of Esther was produced. We already see in the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the beginning of the tendency to Rabbinic legalism; and the book before us in like manner bears traces of the process by which the Jewish people, deprived of the guidance of prophecy and no longer politically independent, passed into that narrow exclusiveness which marked the later Judaism. What Haman urged against the Jews of his day, that "their laws are diverse from all people" (iii. 8), became more and more their boast and pride; and so, instead of celebrating Purim with humble thankfulness for national preservation, they came to make it a time of unseemly revelry and a commemoration of pride and conceit. Nevertheless, we need not disparage the Book of Esther, which in its graphic narrative relates the wonderful preservation from ruin of a people who were destined to a position of which they were unconscious and unworthy.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

1. The Book of Job is so called from the name of the man whose history forms the subject of it. In consists of five parts.

The Prologue (chap. i.—ii.).—This introduces to us a man named Job, living in the Land of Uz, and describes in rapid touches his piety and wealth and the extraordinary calamities that befell him. The man was "perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil," and his piety was reflected in the great prosperity that attended him. Then the narrative describes how the disinterestedness of Job's piety was called in question in the council of heaven by the Adversary. This angel insinuated that Job's religion was insincere, and that if the blessings showered on him by God were withdrawn he would disown God to His face. Satan receives permission to afflict Job, with the reservation that he must not touch him in his person.

In one day the man is stripped of all his possessions and bereaved of his children. Job manifests the liveliest tokens of grief, but his reverent submission to God remains unshaken. "In all this Job sinned not nor ascribed wrong to God" (ch. i.). Again the heavenly council convenes and again the Lord speaks of his servant Job with approval, and upbraids the Adversary for instigating Him to bring undeserved affliction upon him. Satan's answer is ready: the trial did not touch Job close enough; let God touch him in his own bone and flesh and he would disown Him to His face. The Adversary receives permission to afflict Job himself, with the reservation that he shall spare his life. Straightway Job is smitten with sore boils, the leprosy called elephantiasis. His deeper afflictions only reveal greater deeps in Job's reverent piety. "We receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?" (ch. ii.)

Then the narrative informs us how Job's three friends, having heard of his calamities, come to condole with him. They are struck dumb at the sight of his great afflictions. Moved by the sympathising presence of his friends, Job loses his self-control and breaks out into a passionate cry for death (iii).

2. *The Debate between Job and his Friends* (chap. iv.—xxxi. (as also chap. iii.), written in poetry).—This part comprises a series of speeches in which the problem of Job's afflictions and the relation of evil or suffering to the righteousness of God and the conduct of men is discussed. The theory of the friends is that affliction implies previous sin on the part of the sufferer, though in the case of a good man such as Job it is meant to wean him from evil still clinging to him; they therefore exhort him to repentance, and hold up a bright future before him. Job replies that his sufferings are due to sin, of which he is innocent; God wrongly holds him guilty and afflicts him. And, taught by his own history to survey the course of providence in the world more closely, he fails to perceive that inseparable connection between sin and suffering which the three friends insisted on; the providence of God is not, in fact, administered on such a principle. Job agreed with his friends in holding that providence *ought* to be so conducted; hence he missed the righteousness of God in the rule of the world, and this threw his mind into the greatest perplexity regarding God, and tempted him to disown Him, as Satan had predicted he would do.

The discussion between Job and his friends consists of three circles of speeches: (i.) chap. iv.—xiv.; (ii.) chap. xv.—xxi.; (iii.) chap. xxii.—xxxi. Each of these circles comprises six speeches, one by each of the friends, with a reply from Job. In the last round, however, the third disputant, Zophar, fails to speak. This is a confession of defeat; and Job, left victor in the strife, resumes his parable and carries it through a series of chapters, in which, with a profound pathos, he contrasts his former greatness with his present humiliation, protests before heaven his innocence of all offences, and adjures God to reveal to him the cause of his afflictions (chap. xxiv.—xxxi.).

3. *The Speeches of Elihu* (chap. xxxii.—xxxvii.).—A youthful bystander named Elihu, who hitherto had been a silent listener to the debate, here intervenes, not without manifold apologies for presuming to speak in the presence of such aged and wise counsellors. He is dissatisfied both with Job and his friends. He is shocked at the charges of unrighteousness brought by the former against God, and indignant with the three friends because they have failed to answer Job and show him to be in the wrong. His object in speaking is "to give right to his Maker," and in a long discourse he expresses his abhorrence of Job's sentiments, controverts his views on God's providence and the meaning of afflictions, and insists more than the friends had done that afflictions proceed from the goodness of God, who by their means seeks to wean men from evil (chap. xxxiii. 29, 30; xxxvi. 8—10).

4. *The Speeches of the Lord out of the Storm* (chap. xxxviii.—

xlii. 6).—In reply to Job's repeated demand that God would appear and solve the riddle of his sufferings, the Lord answers him out of the storm. The answer is altogether unlike what Job had expected. The speaker does not condescend to refer to Job's individual problem. The intellectual solution of problems can never be the question between God and His servants; He requires from them submission and trust even amidst intellectual darkness, and it is only a deeper sense of what He is that can produce this, and this deeper sense He awakens in Job's mind. In a series of splendid pictures from the material creation and from animal life He makes all the glory of His being to pass before Job. The sufferer is humbled, and lays his hand upon his mouth. Such thoughts of God had never before filled his heart; his former knowledge of Him was like that learned from hearsay. Now his eye saw Him, and he repented his former words in dust and ashes (chap. xl. 4; xlii. 5).

5. *The Epilogue*, also prose (chap. xlii. 7—17).—This describes how Job, having humbled himself before God, and risen to a higher knowledge of Him, is restored to a prosperity double that which he enjoyed before; his former friends again gather round him; he is anew blessed with children, and dies old and full of days. With the exception of the discourses of Elihu, the connection of which with the poem in its original form may be liable to doubt, all these five parts appear original elements of the work as it came from the hand of the author, though it is possible that there might be slight additions in the second and fourth divisions.

6. The kind of literary composition to which the Book of Job belongs has been a subject of discussion both in ancient and modern times. Some have held that the book was historical in all its parts, that the events narrated happened as they are described, and that the speeches of Job and his friends were spoken as we have them. Others have maintained that the book was a simple creation of the author's mind, with no historical foundation, being a didactic poem. While a third view is that, though mainly a creation of the author's mind, the poem embodies an historical tradition, which the writer made use of as suitable for his moral purpose.

Among the Jews in early times the opinion seems to have been general that the book was historical. Some scholars, however, held a different view. In the Talmud (A.D. 450) a rabbi is alluded to who had said, "A Job existed not, and was not created; he is a parable." And the great Rabbi Maimonides (died 1204) advocated the opinion that "Job is a parable, meant to exhibit the views of mankind in regard to Providence." In the Christian

Church also the prevailing view was to the effect that the book was historical. Luther, however, while admitting an historical basis, considered that the facts had been poetically treated. In his "Table Talk" he says, "I hold the Book of Job to be real history; but that everything so happened and was so done I do not believe, but think that some ingenious, pious, and learned man composed it as it is." This view, however, did not commend itself to other Protestant writers, who thought such an opinion scarcely reconcileable with just views of Scripture. Fred. Spanheim, in his "History of Job" (1670), maintained that "Job, if it be not history, is a fraud of the writer." Such a judgment would condemn as frauds not only the majority of modern compositions, but the dramatic and parabolic writings of all ages.

Happily a juster and wider conception of the nature of Scripture now prevails, and we are prepared to find in it any form of composition which it is natural for men to employ, and which may be effective for its moral purpose and fitted to influence the minds of men. The general view in modern times coincides with that of Luther, that the book reposes on an historical tradition, which the author has used and embellished, and made the vehicle for conveying the moral instruction which it was his object to teach. There are still some scholars, however, who regard the book as a truly poetical creation, and this view is held even by writers of the most conservative opinions in regard to Scripture, such as Hengstenberg.

7. There are several things which show that the book is not literal history, *e.g.* the views of the heavenly council given in the prologue (chap. i. ii.; comp. 1 Kings xxii. 19), and the long addresses put into the mouth of the Lord (chap. xxxviii.—xlii.); the symbolical numbers three and seven used to describe Job's flocks and his children (i. 2, 3,), and the fact that his possessions are exactly doubled to him on his restoration, while he again receives seven sons and three daughters, precisely as before (xlii. 12, 13). The description of the incidence of his calamities, too, is dramatic and ideal (i. 13. *seq.*), while the profound thought and highly-wrought imagery in the speeches of Job and his friends show that, so far from being the extemporaneous utterances of three or four persons casually brought together, they are the elaborate and leisurely production of a writer of the highest genius.

On the other hand, it is not quite probable that the book is a purely poetical invention. The allusion in Ezekiel (chap. xiv. 14) can hardly be to our present book, but rather to a tradition which represented Job as a man famed for piety in ancient times. And it is the manner of Hebrew writers to attach their

works to the name of some great personage of former times, as the author of Ecclesiastes makes Solomon the living embodiment of the wisdom which he describes. It is probable, therefore, that the writer of Job, having a moral purpose in view, revived a tradition slumbering in the minds of the people, finding it suitable to his design and more likely to interest men because not altogether unfamiliar to them. Naturally it is not possible to decide now what precise elements belonged to the tradition. A story could scarcely exist which did not contain the name of the hero, and the name "Job" is no doubt historical. In all probability the tradition included Job's great prosperity and power, his unparalleled and inexplicable sufferings, and possibly also his restoration; probably, too, the fact that the mystery of his sufferings engaged the attention of the wise men of his country and formed the subject of discussion. It might be that Uz, the country of Job, and the names of his three friends, and the story of his wife, belonged to the tradition, though this is less certain.

The book has been called an epic by some, by others a drama, more particularly a tragedy, and by others still a didactic poem. That the poem has a didactic purpose is undeniable. It is equally evident that it contains many elements of the drama, such as dialogue, and a plot with an entanglement, development, and solution. Much in the action may rightly be called tragic, but the happy conclusion is at variance with the conception of a proper tragedy. Any idea of representing his work on a stage never crossed the author's mind; his object was to instruct his countrymen, to sustain their faith in God, and inspire them with hope in the future. Though the book cannot be called a drama, it is certainly dramatic. The action, however, is internal and mental, being the varying moods of a great soul struggling with the mysteries of its fate, and not trying external situations. This action is really the thing of interest in the book, because through it the answer is worked out to the prediction of the Adversary, "He will disown thee to thy face." This prediction is falsified. Job, though he falls into sin in the course of the debate with his friends, continues to cling to his faith in God, which becomes stronger as the dispute proceeds, until finally his mind regains its peace through the appearance and words of the Lord.

The Meaning of the Book.—It has been found very difficult to dispose all the parts of the book under a single conception, and some writers have contented themselves with stating a few of the more prominent truths which it teaches. The prologue, for instance, shows that even pious men may be visited with severe afflictions, which it is wrong to consider due to special sins on their part, or to regard as signs of God's displeasure; they may

be rather permitted by God in order to try the pious mind, and to elevate it through the trial to a higher degree of godliness. Again, the impatience of Job under his afflictions, and his impugning of the righteousness of God, teach us that it is presumption in man thus to seek to call God to give an account of His doings, seeing the providence of God is beyond the mind of man to fathom, whose true wisdom is to fear the Lord and eschew evil; while the final history of Job, his restoration and peace, shows that God will at last deliver the pious sufferer if he perseveres in his righteousness, or if, having fallen into sinful murmuring under his sufferings, he repents of his evil.

These are all great truths clearly taught in the book; it is probable, however, that some more definite and single lesson is to be discovered in it. The books of Scripture have generally a practical aim, explainable from the circumstances of the time at which they were written, and they have usually the public design of instructing or consoling the people, or of sustaining their faith and hope amidst their trials. The Book of Job was evidently written during a time of great distress, and though it be the sufferings of an individual that are described, the sufferer must be held to be a type of the pious sufferers of his time, or even of the suffering nation of Israel. The disasters of the Exile and the prolonged miseries which followed it, were felt to be due to the sins of the people, and when the nation as a whole was considered, this was the true explanation. Yet there were many pious individuals in the nation on whom great calamities had fallen because they were involved in the sins of others. Their sufferings were due to sins of which they had not themselves been guilty, the sins of those before them or those around them.

This singular fact, when reflected on, became a fruitful source of profound religious thoughts. When the fact that the godly suffered for the offences of the unjust and rebellious was coupled with the other fact, or with the hope that by the perseverance and the efforts of these godly sufferers transgressors would be converted from their evil and restored, there was a step taken towards a doctrine of vicarious suffering. On the other hand, the feeling of the righteous that they were suffering because of the sins of those before them would be apt to lie upon them with a crushing weight, paralyzing all individual effort. They expressed this feeling by saying, "The fathers ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," and prophets like Ezekiel contend against such a state of mind, and endeavour to free men from the shackles of this belief, and to impress on them the truth of individual responsibility to God (Ezek. xviii. 2).

Naturally, when the false exaggerations of the doctrine that

the sins of the fathers were visited on the children had begun to be overcome, and the truth acquired clearness that God's dealings with each man and with each generation of men bore immediately on their own conduct, and were directed towards their own good, the question arose, What is God's providential purpose in the sufferings of the righteous? And this is the question to which the answer is given in the Book of Job. The answer is not a universal or a conclusive one, it is merely one for the circumstances of the time, an answer additional to other answers already known; and the answer is, that the sufferings of the righteous may be a trial of their faith, which, if successfully borne, will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and lift them up into fuller knowledge of God and more assured peace.

This truth is taught directly by the author of the book in the prologue (chap. i. ii.), and it is illustrated in the history which Job's mind passes through as reflected in the debate with his friends, and finally as instructed by God. The debate of Job with his friends regarding the meaning of evil contributes nothing positively, but it shows that the old views advocated by the friends are untenable, and thus clears the foundation on which the writer erects his own principle. Both Job and his friends come to the discussion of the question of Job's afflictions, ignorant of the true meaning of his sufferings as disclosed to us in the prologue. The three friends come armed with the old belief that wherever there is great suffering there must have been great sin in the sufferer to account for it. Afflictions from the hand of God, however, are not meant to destroy him, but to arrest him in his evil way; and they earnestly exhort Job to lay his chastisement to heart and seek unto God, promising him a future more brilliant and blessed than his past. Job agreed with the three friends in the belief that sufferings from the hand of God came on none but on those whom He held guilty of having greatly sinned; hence, conscious of his innocence, he concluded that God held him guilty wrongly and was become his enemy.

Hence he has a double conflict to maintain: first, the merely dialectic one against his friends; and secondly, the far more profoundly agitating one with God, which calls forth the deepest religious emotions and the loftiest aspirations of his heart. The contention of his friends he is able to refute on both its sides. They insisted that sufferings were experienced only where there had been sin. Job meets this on one side with his own case, a man suffering though innocent; and, on the other side, he points to many a wicked man whose life is prosperous and his death

easy, whose bier is followed in honour to the grave, and on whose dust the clods of the valley lie softly. When the author allows Job thus to refute the belief of the invariable connection of suffering with sin, we may be sure that it was his purpose to cast discredit on that theory and show that it was not a solution of the problem universally applicable. And having disposed of it he substitutes for it the principle that sufferings may be a trial of the faith of the godly.

That they are such a trial, and how they are so, is exhibited in the struggle which Job's mind passes through. The author of Job is an artist and a great poet, but though he gives ideal intensity and grandeur to the part which his hero plays, he does not create it. Probably he himself, certainly many others in that disastrous time, had played it in real life. That which made afflictions so severe a religious trial to the saints of that age was just the belief, which was held in common by Job and his friends, that the external events of life truly reflected the mind of God towards them: when they were prosperous they enjoyed His favour, when under affliction they experienced His displeasure—God rewarded every man according to his works. This, they believed, was the case, and it ought to be the case, they thought, under the providence of a righteous ruler of men. Hence when things were reversed, when the wicked triumphed and the righteous cleansed his heart in vain, their faith received such a shock as made it totter. Probably a deeper sense of personal unworthiness might have hushed all murmurs of the righteous under their afflictions, but the prosperity of the wicked was less easily accounted for. And when men, as in Job's case, charged such a saint, conscious of rectitude, with foul iniquities, his conscience reclaimed against the imputation, and as he knew no alternative, he was driven to impugn the rectitude of God in afflicting him.

Job takes this step founding upon his own experience, but he goes farther. Compelled to take a general survey of the world and the life of men, to meet the instances adduced by his friends, he perceives his own experience repeated a hundred times: that which befalls men is in no way apportioned according to their character:—

> "One dieth in his full strength,
> Being wholly at ease and quiet;
> And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul,
> And hath not tasted of good;
> They lie down alike in the dust,
> And the worms cover them." (Ch. xxi. 23).

Thus Job's victory over his friends is not gained without

inflicting a mortal wound upon himself. He misses the rectitude of God not only in his own instance but in God's general rule of the world (chap. xxiv. 1). But this was to pluck the moral Sun out of the heavens. This terrible thought of an unrighteous God paralyzed Job's heart. It was not his afflictions in themselves that dismayed him, it was that God was unrighteous in inflicting them: "Therefore am I troubled before him: when I consider, I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft (terror-stricken), and the Almighty troubleth me" (chap. xxiii. 15). And the question was not a mere speculative one, as it might be nowadays: it was a profoundly religious one. Job had hitherto lived, as he thought, in the fellowship of a great and righteous Person, whose gracious providence had everywhere preserved his spirit (chap. x. 12), and memories of this fellowship in the hallowed past and yearnings for its renewal again in the present, crowd into the sufferer's mind and give a deeply religious colour and a singular pathos to all the struggles of his intellect.

As the question of the sufferings of the righteous was not of old a mere intellectual one but one of practical religious life, many answers are suggested to it. The answer given from the side of God in the speeches from the storm (chap. xxxviii. *seq.*) is, in the words of the Apostle: "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that replieth against God?"—although this answer is not made by God without such a revelation of Himself in making it as to give it power to compose the perplexed heart. The answer with which the pious soul stills its own trouble amidst a darkness which it cannot pierce is: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou holdest my right hand" (Psalm lxxiii. 23), an answer given many times in Job's speeches. These are practical answers sufficient for the hour. Yet the religious mind craves for some principle which will carry it through its perplexities and justify the ways of God to man. Such a principle the author of the book suggests in the prologue, and further illustrates in the epilogue. And he allows Job to rise to a solution, which has in it all the elements of a universal one and satisfies the cravings of a human heart. This solution is reached in the well-known passage (chap. xix. 25):—

> "But I know that my redeemer liveth,
> And in after time he shall stand upon the dust,
> And, after this my skin is destroyed,
> And without my flesh, I shall see God."

Job's redeemer is God, and he is assured that when his disease has brought him unto death he shall see God, no longer his

enemy but in peace. To suppose that Job expects this vision of God on this side of the grave is to contradict the whole scope of his language throughout the book. He is assured that his malady is mortal, and his malady was to him token of God's displeasure and the hiding of His face. On this side of death he shall not see God, but beyond his eyes shall behold Him. He expresses his assurance that he shall die under God's chastening hand with an unvarying consistency; he has no hope of God's favour in this life, but, assured that God knows his innocence, he has an invincible certainty of it in the future. Hence in chap. xiv. the idea rises before his mind that after death he might be restored to a new life upon the earth to enjoy God's favour:

"Oh that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol,
That Thou wouldst keep me secret till Thy wrath be past,
That Thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me—
If a man die shall he live again?—
All the days of my appointed time would I wait till my release came;
Thou wouldst call and I would answer Thee,
Thou wouldst have a desire to the work of Thine hands."

And in chap. xvi. 18, after appealing to the earth not to cover his blood unjustly shed, he adds his assurance of being justified in the future: "Even now behold my witness is in heaven, and he that shall vouch for me is on high." And this thrusting of the final solution of the mysteries of God's providence beyond the borders of this life is in harmony with those other passages where Job pushes his principles to their proper extreme. He shows not only that he himself and other righteous men die with their righteousness unrecognised in this world, but on the other side wicked men die in full prosperity and peace; in neither case is the ultimate solution seen in this life.

Of course we must beware of attributing to any saint of that age such clear conceptions of the condition after death as subsequent revelation has given to us. Job has absolutely no knowledge of a *condition* after death, except the idea common in his day, that deceased persons descended into Sheol, the place of the dead: "A land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness" (chap. x. 22; iii. 17—19). Hence his redeemer "will stand upon the dust"; his assurance is that though he die under his malady, as he is certain he shall, yet notwithstanding his death he shall yet see God reconciled to him, and be vindicated by him. His assurance is a religious necessity, a postulate of faith. Hence he rises to this lofty anticipation only for a moment, and falls back again into the demand to know the meaning of his afflictions.

Some writers, feeling justly that Job's anticipation in chap. xix. is the highest point to which the book reaches, have been inclined to think that the author should have closed it here, and that it would have been purer truth to allow Job to go down to the grave clasping to his breast his inextinguishable hope, than to restore him to prosperity in this life, as he does in the epilogue. Now it is plain that the author, when he allows Job to postpone his vindication by God beyond his death, does so of purpose and fully understanding the meaning of what he does, for elsewhere Job shows that the true relations of men to God, whether righteous or wicked, many times do not come to light in this life. But religion requires that they shall somehow be brought to light, and therefore this can be only after death.

Now if the faith in a future life had been sufficiently advanced to enable the author to *show* Job's vindication after death, he would naturally have ended his drama in this way. But there existed no such advanced faith or knowledge in regard to a future life in his time. The utmost that the efforts of pious spirits had attained in his day was in occasional flights of faith to pierce the darkness beyond this life, and assure themselves that their life with God here should not be interrupted there. But there was no such clearness of knowledge as to afford room for a scene of reconciliation and union between God and the pious soul. And yet the purpose of the writer required that he should *verify* Job's anticipations, because the object of his book was to show that afflictions are a trial leading to higher blessedness; and hence he is obliged to allow Job's hope to be verified in this life. It is to be observed, however, that the desire of Job's heart was a religious one entirely, that he should see God, and this desire was granted in the revelation of God out of the storm; the subsequent prosperity was but a corollary to this and no part of it.

8. *The Unity of the Book.*—Objections have been made to the prologue and epilogue with the view of showing that these were no parts of the original book. The objections are of very little weight; some historical introduction must have preceded the book, and there is no reason to suppose that our present introduction was not the primary one. The objection to the epilogue is that it falls into the old doctrine of retribution in this life, which it is the object of the book to discredit. This objection would tell also against the divine speeches, and the religious composure in this life which Job is enabled through them to reach.

The prevailing view among modern scholars is that the speeches

of Elihu (ch. xxxii.—xxxvii.) do not belong to the original book, but are the insertion of a later time. The grounds of this view are such as these:—1. That Elihu is unknown both to the prologue and epilogue; 2. That Job makes no reply to him; 3. That his citations from the book are so exact as to betray a reader of the poem; 4. That the language of his speeches shows signs of deterioration, marking a later age, and that he is characterised by a mannerism quite unlike the other speakers; 5. That his speeches destroy the connection between the challenge of Job (ch. xxxi. 35 *seq.*) and the reply of the Almighty; and 6, finally, that Elihu occupies virtually the same grounds with the friends, and that there is nothing in what he advances against Job which the latter would have regarded as any real answer to his complaints. It is also argued that where Elihu differs from the three friends, it is rather in a more advanced view of sin and a greater insistence upon the goodness of God in his afflictions, as well as in a deeper repugnance to the language of Job; things betraying a later date, and suggesting that the original book perplexed pious minds by its extraordinary boldness. The character of Elihu is very distinct. He is of a very devout nature; his reverence of God and fear before Him are very great. It is this feeling that makes him come forward to meet the assertions of Job—he will ascribe right to his Maker (xxxvi. 3). This reverent sensitiveness in regard to God constitutes the chief charm of Elihu's speeches, and the book would be decidedly poorer for the want of them.

9. *Age and Authorship of the Book.*—The age of the book must not be confounded with the age of Job himself. Job is represented as living in the patriarchal times, and the author of the book has skilfully thrown the colours of this age over his composition. Thus the divine names which the speakers employ are the patriarchal ones: God, God Almighty, but not Jehovah (cf. Ex. vi. 2, 3), though the author uses this name itself, xxviii. 28. Like the great forefathers of Israel, Job is rich in cattle (chap. i. 3; Gen. xii. 16); he is also the priest of his family (chap. i. 5), and offers the patriarchal "burnt-offering;" and all historical events alluded to are those of the patriarchal world (xviii. 15; xxii. 15). But though Job himself belonged to this age, the author is an Israelite, and the book is a reflection of the religious life and religious thought in Israel.

The date of such a book as Job, which contains few allusions to historical events, can be determined only approximately. The literature of Israel is, more than any other literature, national. It was the nation or people that was in covenant with Jehovah, and hence it is the destinies of this subject, the people,

that the religious mind follows with keenest interest. The literary compositions of any age reflect the conditions and state of mind of the people of that age, and the question to be put is: Of what period in the chequered history of the people is the Book of Job a reflection? The opinion expressed by the Talmud that Moses was the author of Job is unworthy of any attention. The antique colour of the book suggested to uncritical minds that it was an ancient composition, and such minds are always ready to ascribe an anonymous writing to some well-known name. Neither the Mosaic age, however, nor the times that followed it—times of stirring enterprise and warfare—were favourable for the production of a work of deep reflection such as Job. And there is evidence in the book itself that the author was familiar with writings usually ascribed to the age of David; the passage chap. vii. 17, betrays a knowledge of Psalm viii.

The earliest period to which the book can be assigned is the age of Solomon, and Luther appears to have placed it in this period, a view in which he is followed by many writers still. If we look into the great collections of the Proverbs, however, such as chap. xxv.—xxix. or x.—xxii., we find that though their purpose is to exhibit the operations of God's providence, there is not a trace in them of the disquieting problems of providence which fill the Book of Job. History had not yet forced such questions on men's minds. The collection Prov. i.—ix. probably belongs to the seventh century, but Job xxviii. is in all probability posterior to it. In Prov. viii. wisdom, *i.e.* a general and satisfying conception of God's operations in the world, is held out as attainable by man; in Job xxviii. such comprehension of providence is spoken of as beyond the range of man's mind. The moral disorders of the world, the sorrowful destinies of many pious men baffled the religious mind of the time.

These two general facts, then, first, that questions of providence have entered upon a new phase, and that not its general course but its problems absorb men's attention; and secondly, that a condition of great disorder and misery forms the background of the poem—both point to a late period in the history of Israel as that to which the book is due. When we read such passages as these: "The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; He covereth the faces of the judges thereof" (ix. 24); "The tabernacles of tyrants prosper, and they that provoke God are secure" (vii. 6); "Out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded crieth out, yet God regardeth not the wrong" (xxiv. 12); and much more of the same kind, we feel that the picture is one of the public condition of the world, and not the mere creation of a sick and gloomy mind.

There are other arguments, also, which suggest a period not earlier than the Exile, *e.g.* the very lofty doctrine of God; and the inwardness of the morality taught (chap. xxxi.), and the points of contact which the book presents with Jeremiah and the ideas of his age, and the parallel between Job and the servant of the Lord in Isaiah xl.—lxvi. Most writers have felt that Job iii. and Jer. xx. 14 *seq.* are not independent of one another. Job iii. is highly elaborate and artistic; but the passage in Jeremiah, just on account of its greater simplicity and naturalness, is probably to be considered the original. The coincidences of Job with Isaiah xl.—lxvi. are very numerous. These chapters are now usually considered to belong to the period of the Exile, and the great probability is that the Book of Job owes its origin to the trials and religious perplexities of the same period.

We have been left in complete ignorance who the author of the book is, just as we are ignorant who the authors of many other parts of Scripture are. The book has been attributed to Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, Heman the Ezrahite, author of Psalm lxxxviii., Isaiah, Hezekiah, author of the hymn Isaiah xxxviii., Baruch, the friend of Jeremiah, and others. Conjecture is entirely vain. No literature contains so many great anonymous works as that of Israel. It was only the prophets that usually put their names to their writings. The writers of the Old Testament did not speak their own words but those of the Lord, and having delivered their message they passed out of sight, forgetting themselves and being speedily forgotten in name by others.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

1. The Psalter forms a part of the third great division of the Hebrew scriptures known as the Kethubhim or Hagiographa. Both from its intrinsic importance and also from its liturgical use it commonly occupied the first place in this division, and hence the Old Testament was summed up under the three names of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke xxiv. 44).*

In Hebrew Bibles the Psalter is called *Tehillim, i.e.* "The Praises," and a more suitable title could hardly have been chosen; for the psalms ring with the voice of joy and thanksgiving; and even those in which the confession of sin, or the wail of sorrow, or the cry for help predominate are not all gloom. The struggle ends in the hope and the assurance of deliverance, and the heart breaks forth into praise.

A yet earlier title, given, however, not to the whole, but only to a portion of the Psalter, is *Tephilloth*, "Prayers." This applies apparently to the collection comprised in the first two books; for the subscription to Psalm lxxii., with which the second book closes, informs us that "The *prayers* of David the son of Jesse are ended," an intimation apparently that all David's psalms, so far as they were then known, had here been gathered together.

It is noticeable that only one psalm in those two books, the 17th, is separately called "A Prayer," and only one in the whole collection, the 145th, is separately called "A Praise;" but the two general titles "prayers" and "praises" admirably sum up the whole character and intention of the Psalter, as the Liturgy and Hymn-book of the Old Testament Church. Our

* The order indeed is not universal, for in the Talmud Ruth precedes the Psalms (the order being Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs) and in the Massoreth and the Spanish MSS. Chronicles is placed first; but in the German MSS. and in most printed editions the order is Psalms, Proverbs, Job; then the five Megilloth, as they are called, viz. Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; and then Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

own English title "Psalms," comes to us through the Latin word from the Septuagint translators, who styled the whole collection ψαλμοί, as denoting that, in accordance with their use in the liturgy of the Temple and the Synagogue, these sacred poems were sung with a musical accompaniment.*

2. *Division of the Psalter.*— The Psalter as it stands in our Hebrew Bibles is divided into five books, the close of each of the first four being marked by a doxology, and the 150th Psalm itself forming the doxology which concludes the last, and indeed the whole collection. These books are distributed as follows:— Book I., Psalms i.—xli.; Book II., Psalms xlii.—lxxii.; Book III., Psalms lxxiii.—lxxxix.; Book IV., Psalms xc.—cvi.; Book V., Psalms cvii.—cl. This division, according to the Midrash on Psalm i. 1, follows that of the Pentateuch: "Moses gave to the Israelites the five Books of the Law, and, corresponding to these, David gave them the Book of Psalms, which consists of five books;" and in like manner Hippolytus, quoted by Epiphanium, calls the Psalter "a second Pentateuch." The division, it must be confessed, is somewhat artificial as regards the Fourth and Fifth Books. At the end of each of the first three books the doxology stands appropriately as marking the end of certain groups or collections of psalms, but there is no appropriateness in the division which separates the 106th Psalm from the 105th. Consequently the doxology must have been placed here by the last collector or editor in order to make up the fivefold division. In 1 Chron. xiv. 35, 36, there is a quotation with some variation, from verses 47 and 48 of the 106th Psalm, the latter of which forms the doxology. But the chronicler, instead of giving it "Let all the people say, Amen," turns the ascription into an historical fact, "And all the people said, Amen." It is doubtful therefore whether the division between these books existed in his time, for he treats the first part of the doxology as an integral part of the Psalm.

It will be observed that a larger number of psalms are by their titles ascribed to David than to any other author: all in the First Book, except four that are anonymous; nearly all in the second half of the Second Book; one in the Third Book; two in the fourth; and fifteen in the Fifth; in all seventy-three psalms, or nearly one-half of the whole collection.

Next to him come David's singers: (i) The Sons of Korah, to whom twelve psalms are assigned (or eleven if we regard Psalms xlii. and xliii. as one); (ii) Asaph, who is also the reputed author of twelve psalms. He seems to have ranked only second

* The word "psalter" is strictly the name of a musical instrument; whether it was invented in Greece or in Babylon is uncertain.

to David as a master of sacred song (1 Chron. xv. 7—21, xvi. 5 : Neh. xii. 46) ; (iii) Heman (mentioned 2 Chron. xx. 19 as a famous musician), who as a member of the Korahite guild is said to have written Psalm lxxviii., for this seems to be the meaning of the double title of that psalm : (iv) Ethan the Ezrahite, who, like Heman, is named only as the author of one psalm, the 89th. The only other authors to whom particular psalms are ascribed are Moses, who is said to have written one psalm, the 90th, acknowledged on all hands to be a psalm of great antiquity, and Solomon, who is said to have written two, the 72nd and the 127th.

There are indeed certain variations in the titles as they stand in the Septuagint and in other ancient versions. For instance, in the title of Ps. cxxxvii. the LXX. add the name of Jeremiah to that of David. In Psalms cxxxviii., cxlvi., cxlvii., cxlviii., they gave Haggai and Zechariah as the authors, the three last being anonymous in the Hebrew text. In lxxi. they add to the name of David, "Of the sons of Jonadab and of those that were first led captive," thus indicating their belief that this was a psalm dating from the Captivity, whilst retaining the name of David as they found it in their copies. We see then that by far the larger number of the psalms were traditionally held to be David's, or to have been written by Levitical singers appointed by him for the musical service of the Temple and inspired by his influence and example ; and hence the whole collection came to be styled "Psalms of David," just as the Book of Proverbs was called "Proverbs of Solomon," though a large part of it belongs to a later time.

3. *The Formation and Arrangement of the Psalter.*—When we come to examine the Psalter more closely one of the first things that strikes us is that besides its division into five books it consists of a number of smaller collections. Groups of psalms supposed to be by the same author and having a common purpose are placed together. Thus the First Book consists almost exclusively of psalms ascribed to David ; the second of a series of Psalms by the sons of Korah, and another series by David ; the third has a group by Asaph, followed by a second group of Korahite psalms ; in the fourth, Psalms xcii.—c. form one great prophetical anthem ; in the fifth we have besides "the Pilgrim Songs" (cxx.—cxxxii.) and the "Hallelujah Psalms," the group cxiii.—cxviii. which is called "the Hallel." All these were originally no doubt separate collections, smaller hymn-books, which were at length combined so as to form our present Psalter.

In the main, as might be expected, the arrangement is chronological. The Fourth and Fifth Books carry upon their face

the evidence of a later date. They are full of allusions to the Exile and to the Return. The earlier books are of a different character. We may assign the first two in the main to David and his contemporaries. The Third represents a later period of Jewish song and may have been collected by "the men of Hezekiah." But the chronological order is not always observed. There is one psalm in the Second Book, the 44th, which is certainly not of David's time, and has been brought down by many critics to the time of the Maccabees. In like manner the 74th and the 79th in the Third Book have been held to refer to the destruction and profanation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. On the other hand, the 101st and the 110th Psalms in the Fourth Book are almost certainly Davidic. Still in the main, as I have said, the earlier psalms are to be found in the earlier books, the later in those with which the collection closes.

Let us now look at the phenomena presented by the several books with special reference to the supposed authorship of the different psalms. The psalms in the First Book, except four, the 1st, the 2nd, the 10th, and the 33rd, which are anonymous, are ascribed, as has been said, to David. But the 1st Psalm was commonly regarded as a general introduction to the book, and according to an ancient arrangement the 2nd Psalm was united with it, which would account for the latter having no title. Similarly in the version of the LXX. the 10th Psalm forms one with the 9th, and the alphabetical arrangement, which though broken is still discernible running through both psalms, lends colour to the theory that they were originally one poem. On the other hand, the LXX. give Psalm xxxiii. to David.

At the end of the Second Book we read, "The Prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." In point of fact Psalms li.—lxxi. are attributed to David with the exception of three which are anonymous in the Hebrew, but at least two of them are by the LXX. given to the same author. But the first half of this book (Psalms xlii.—l.) is a collection of Korahite poems. It is scarcely credible that the subscription could have been added by the general editor. He would not have inserted the twelve Korahite psalms so as to break the series of Davidic hymns, which but for this insertion would run on continuously from the beginning of the First Book (Psalm iii.) to the end of the Second. There is another important circumstance to be noted. In the First Book the Divine Name almost exclusively employed is Jehovah (Yahveh), whereas the abstract term Elohim is quite exceptional. In the Second Book, on the contrary, the use of Elohim is the rule and the use of Jehovah the exception. That this is deliberately done is shown for instance in such a Psalm

as the 45th, where we have the repetition of the name, "God, thy God" instead of "Jehovah, thy God." Still more striking is the change where the same psalm occurs in both books. Thus the 14th Psalm appears with slight alterations as the 53rd, and the latter portion of the 40th as the 70th, and the two editions are distinguished by the respective use of the two names. This cannot possibly be due to the same redactor, who would never have thought of arbitrarily substituting the one name for the other in the two editions. It is evident that this was done as a part of a general plan. It is doubtful even whether the editor of the second collection could have had the first before him when he was preparing his own.

4. But were all the psalms in the First Book with the exception above mentioned written by David? When we come to examine their contents and compare them with the historical notices which form part of the inscriptions in several instances, we shall find reason to question the accuracy of the traditional statements. The 9th and 10th Psalms obviously refer to a state of things to which we find no parallel in David's history. Heathen enemies have been in the land and have cruelly oppressed Israel; but God has executed judgment upon them and overthrown them, so that their very memorial has perished. The time is subsequent to the removal of the ark to Zion, for God is described as "dwelling in Zion," and the poet declares he will praise Him "in the gates of the daughter of Zion." But the circumstances are not those of David, if we are to take the history in the Books of Samuel as a guide to us. Again Psalms xx. and xxi. could hardly have been written by David: they are "not spoken by a king, but addressed to the king by his people." "To suppose that David wrote for the people the words in which they should express their feelings towards his throne is to sacrifice the fresh spontaneity of the Psalms to mere theory." Psalm xxii. describes sufferings such as David never knew. Never in any of his persecutions by Saul was he reduced to straits such as these, and though this is strictly a Messianic psalm, still we have no right to assume that it is so entirely predictive as to correspond to nothing in the circumstances of the author. In the inscription of Psalm xxxiv. Abimelech is said to have been King of Gath in the time of David, whereas the only Abimelech mentioned in the history was a contemporary of Abraham's, and Achish was King of Gath when David found refuge there.*

* Dr. Robertson Smith alleges objections regarding the Davidic authorship of some of the other psalms that do not appear to me to be equally valid. "Several of the psalms of the first book," he says, "not only speak of Zion

5. But as we have no reason to suppose that David prefixed his name to his own poems, and as in accordance with Oriental custom they were probably handed down for some time by word of mouth, sung or recited, before they were committed to writing, it is easy to see how psalms the authorship of which was doubtful or unknown would be given as a matter of course to the greatest of the national poets. The most that can be said is that these titles represent the tradition at the time when the first collection, Psalms i.—xli., was made. How easily the Davidic authorship of any hymn came to be accepted we see from the statement in the First Book of Chronicles (xvi. 7) that, when he appointed the Levitical singers, David delivered a psalm into their hands which is a mere cento of quotations from other Psalms, chiefly from the 105th and 106th, which are both as late as the Exile, the 106th having a distinct reference to it (ver. 46, 47). And it strikingly illustrates the uncritical method of procedure which could assign this composite psalm to David, that not only is this reference to the Captivity put into his mouth (1 Chron. xvi. 35), but, as has already been observed, even the doxology slightly varied with which the Fourth Book concludes, though the division between the Fourth and Fifth Books is unquestionably later than the Exile.

6. As regards the series of Davidic psalms found in the Second Book, Psalms li.—lxx., except lxvi. and lxvii., which are in the Hebrew anonymous, the same remark applies to the titles of these as to those of the First Book: the contents of the Psalm are often at variance with the reputed authorship. The 59th Psalm may be taken as an instance in point. It is said to have been written by David, "when Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death." But the allusions in the psalm to the writer's enemies are quite inconsistent with the supposed circumstances. Saul's emissaries could not possibly be described as making their rounds every evening as a patrol about the city, uttering oaths and curses, howling like unclean dogs seeking their garbage, men whose curse it is to wander about for bread, men finally whose overthrow will make the name of the God

as God's holy mountain, which David must do, after he had brought the ark to Jerusalem, but allude to the Temple in which the singer of Psalm xxvii. desires to live continually. But the house of God at Zion in David's time was not a temple but a tent." I have, however, shown in my commentary on the 5th Psalm that the word translated "temple" may be used of any considerable structure, as it was for instance of the Tabernacle and the surrounding buildings at Shiloh; and on the 27th Psalm I have pointed out that the author expressly calls these same structures "a tent." Obviously, as at Shiloh, there was not merely the tent but buildings of a substantial kind (doors are mentioned) which enclosed it.

of Jacob known throughout the world. It is difficult to believe that such a psalm could apply to *any* circumstances in David's life. The Davidic collection was believed, as we have seen, to end with the Second Book. Yet we find a few more psalms, more especially in the Fifth Book, bearing his name. These may have escaped the notice of the collector of the first two books, but most of them seem to be of later date.

7. There can be no doubt that the fourth and Fifth Books were compiled subsequent to the return from the Exile. The Exile itself, with its painful memories and ardent hopes, had stirred many a heart to song. We hear in these psalms the sorrowful sighing of those who hung their harps on the willows by the waters of Babylon, and the joy of those who were "like unto them that dream," when "the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion." Many of these poems tell their own tale, and, speaking generally, the tone and colouring are those of a later time. The sparkle, the vigour, the concentrated energy and passion of the Davidic lyre are for the most part absent; they flow in a smoother and gentler current. It does not follow, however, that none of these songs belong to an earlier period. Some ancient poems might have been overlooked when the earlier collections were made, and psalms like the 101st and the 110th are both of them almost certainly psalms of David.

But there is no trace in these books, as in the earlier ones, of distinct groups or collections of Davidic psalms. Those ascribed to David are scattered here and there, and some of those which the titles give to him it is quite certain are not his. This is manifestly the case with the 122nd, which, speaking of "thrones of the house of David," must have been written at a time when his dynasty had been long in existence. The 124th Psalm is full of the return from Babylon. The 144th is a curiously composite piece, containing many quotations from earlier poems, and could not have been written by David. It is ascribed to him exactly in the same way as we have already seen in 1 Chron. xvi. 8—36; a psalm put together out of Psalms xcvi., cv., and cvi., is said to have been given by David "into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." The same may be said, but upon other grounds, of the 139th Psalm. It is one of the most striking psalms in the whole collection, in loftiness of conception and solemn grandeur of expression second to none, but its Aramaic forms either betoken a dialectic variety, the author perhaps being a native of the northern kingdom, or are evidence that it was composed after the Exile.

8. The Fifth Book has one distinct group of psalms, called in our Version "Songs of Degrees," which is of peculiar interest.

With one exception they are all very short, and must have constituted originally a small separate hymn-book, intended apparently for the use of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to keep the national feasts. The title of these psalms, which is strictly "Songs of Ascent" (or going up), denotes the purpose which the collector had in view. Other interpretations have indeed been given of the title, but this seems the most probable, and it is that with which the contents of the collection harmonise; some of these poems referring directly to incidents of the journey, and others expressing the feelings of the pilgrims as they came in sight of the Holy City or stood within its gates. But there are also in these little songs constant allusions to the return from the Captivity, showing that they could not have been written earlier than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Hence some critics have supposed that the "going up" of the title refers to the return from Babylon, which was spoken of as a "going up" to the Holy Land. The other explanation, however, is the better, as being the more comprehensive. The collection consists of post-Captivity psalms, but it was intended for pilgrimages to the Second Temple, and hence the double allusions by which it is marked. The custom of going up to keep the feasts with music and song was ancient, as we learn from Isaiah xxx. 29.

9. The psalms which are assigned to the Levitical singers are not by their titles associated with any particular circumstances in the history. But it is perfectly plain that such historical psalms as the 74th and 79th, describing the devastation wrought in the Temple and the profanation of it by the erection of heathen emblems, could not have been written by the Asaph who was the contemporary of David. Hence some critics have maintained that "Asaph" stands for "the sons of Asaph," and that these psalms were composed by members of the Levitical guild, either after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Temple, or after the havoc and profanation wrought by Antiochus Epiphanes. It is noticeable, however, that we never find "the sons of Asaph" in any of the Psalm inscriptions, though we do find the phrase in the Book of Chronicles.

These two groups of psalms by Levitical singers are marked by certain peculiarities. In those ascribed to Asaph God is frequently spoken of as the *Shepherd* of Israel, which is His flock, and as the *Judge* both of Israel and of all the nations of the world. There are many references to the giving of the law on Sinai, to the march through the wilderness, and to other portions of the ancient history, such as do not occur in the psalms of the first two books. In these psalms both the Divine names, *Elohim* and

Jehovah, and also the names *'El* and *'Elyon* (Most High) occur. There are besides several expressions which are found either exclusively or most frequently in these psalms.

In like manner the psalms "of the sons of Korah" have their characteristic features. As in the psalms of Asaph God is the *Judge,* so in these psalms He is represented as the *King.* Jerusalem is spoken of as "the city of God," and as under the protection of God. The name of God used by preference is Elohim, though Jehovah is also found in xlvi., xlvii., xlviii., lxxxiv., lxxxvii.; other names are "the Living God" and "Jehovah Sabaoth" (Jehovah of Hosts).

10. Both groups have several features in common. Both the Korahite and Asaphite psalms are, with few exceptions, national songs, either prayers for the nation in its distresses or thanksgivings for its deliverance; they abound in references to the Sanctuary and the joy to be experienced in its service; they reflect the feelings and hopes of those who, like the Levites, were engaged in that service. The hypothesis therefore that they were written by or composed for the use of members of Levitical guilds is thus confirmed. Dr. Robertson Smith calls attention to another feature which the two groups have in common. They contain no confession of sin. In some of them Israel appears as divided into a righteous class, to whom the singer belongs, and a wicked class against whom he prays. Elsewhere the whole nation seems to speak with one voice, and claims to be righteous, and not suffering for its own sin. "Wherever sin is acknowledged in these psalms it is the sin of a former generation;" which, however, can hardly be maintained in the case of the 85th Psalm. And he proceeds to argue that it is impossible that the really godly could have used such language before the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. No Israelite before the Exile could have used language like that of the 44th Psalm, averring that, in spite of their afflictions, they had not forgotten God, and that for His sake they were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. This refers to a religous persecution, and hence he would bring down this psalm and the 74th and 79th to a date as late as that of Artaxerxes II., when the Persian general Bogoses defiled the Temple.

The conclusions at which we arrive from these investigations are:—

First. That the present Psalter is made up of a number of smaller collections, which originally existed in an independent form, the earliest of them being a Davidic hymnal.

Secondly. That besides these groups there were several indi-

vidual psalms, which were either taken up at different times into one of the minor collections or were incorporated by the final editor, and inserted in their present place for reasons which cannot now be ascertained.

Thirdly. That we cannot trust the notices as to the authorship of the different psalms, especially where these notices are of an historical kind, because there is a manifest disagreement between the language of the poem and the supposed circumstances of the writer.

Fourthly. The existing arrangement of the Psalter is so far chronological that in the main the earlier groups stand first and the later last; but individual psalms seem here and there to be curiously out of place.

12. *Numbering of the Psalms.*—We find a different numbering of the Psalms in the Hebrew and in the LXX. Indeed, even the Hebrew MSS. exhibit some varieties in this respect. In some of them Psalms i. and ii., Psalms xlii. and xliii., and Psalms cxvi. and cxvii. are united. On the other hand, Psalm cxviii. is divided into two, or even into three. In many instances the entire number is set down at 149. The LXX., who are followed by the Vulgate, combine Psalms ix. and x., and also cxiv. and cxv. On the other hand, they divide cxvi. into two (ver. 1—9, 10—19), and in like manner cxlvii. into two (ver. 1—11, 12—20); thus obtaining the same number of 150 for the whole collection, though by a different distribution.

This divergence is easily explained if we remember, that in the case of those psalms which have no inscription there would be little to distinguish between the end of one psalm and the beginning of the next, nothing more, perhaps, than a small space between the two. In the earliest MSS. probably the copyist would not have even the inscription to guide him, and would be left very much to his own judgment. That two psalms so utterly unlike in their contents and style as the first and second should nevertheless have been regarded as one psalm, as they were by many of the Rabbis and according to the Talmudic tradition (T.B. *Berakhoth*, 9 b), shows in what an uncritical fashion questions of this kind were decided. The only ground alleged for this union of the two was, that the one began and the other ended with the same word "Blessed" (*ashre'*).

As regards other instances, the LXX. were probably right in combining Psalms ix and x., as the acrostic arrangement, though broken, may still be traced through both psalms. And Psalms xlii. and xliii., being marked by the same refrain, doubtless constituted originally one poem. On the other hand, some psalms which now appear as one may have been formed out of two.

This may have been the case with xix. ver. 1—6 and 7—14; xxiv. 1—6 and 7—10; cxliv. 1—11 and 12—15; and possibly a few others. Indeed, there are many proofs that the Psalter has undergone editing. Additions, omissions, alterations of particular passages were made, as in our modern hymn-books, in order to adapt a psalm to a special occasion. This will explain how Psalms ix. and x., and Psalms xlii. and xliii., which were originally one, came to be broken into two, and how Psalm lxx., which was originally the concluding portion of Psalm xl., came to be detached from it and altered; and how, again, Psalm liii. appears as a new version of Psalm xiv. Psalm cviii. consists of portions of two other psalms, lvii. 8—12 and lx. 7—14. The variations in Psalm xviii., as compared with the version of the same psalm given in 2 Sam. xxii., may have arisen from their having been transmitted orally long before they were committed to writing.

13. *Liturgical and Musical Notices.*—As regards these it must be confessed that we are very much in the dark.

(i.) *Liturgical.* To this class belongs the oft-repeated *Lam'natsäach,* rendered in the Authorised Version "For the Chief Musician." He was probably the person who, like the precentor in our cathedrals, had the chief direction of the musical portion of the services; the word is used in 2 Chron. ii. 17 in the general sense of "leader." The phrase may either denote that the particular psalm to which it is prefixed was given to him to be set to music for the Temple service, or simply that, as intended for public worship, it was put into his hands that he might take care that it was properly rendered both by band and singers. The expression occurs fifty-five times in the inscriptions (fifty-two times in the first three books), and, except in the case of two anonymous psalms, lxvi. and lxvii., is only prefixed to psalms of David, Asaph, and the sons of Korah. Connected with this perhaps is the notice *l'lammed* ("for teaching"), Psalm lx., which may mean that the precentor was to teach the psalm to the Levites, just as David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan was to be taught to the men of Judah, 2 Sam. i. 18.*

Two other liturgical notices are apparently connected with sacrificial acts. Thus *l'hazkîr* ("to bring to remembrance"), Psalms xxxviii. and lxx., may refer to the *azkarâh,* or "offering of incense," at the time of offering which these psalms were to be sung. The phrase occurs in 1 Chron. xvi. 4, where it is rendered in the Revised Version "to celebrate," and is joined with "to give thanks and to praise" as a part of the duties pre-

* "The Bow" may be the title of the elegy, or the word may have crept into the text by mistake. It does not appear in the Vat. text of the LXX.

scribed to the Levites. In like manner, *Thodah* ("for thanksgiving"), Psalm c., may have been intended to signify that the psalm was to be sung when the thank-offering was presented.

(ii.) *Musical.* Under this head come—(*a*) The different names by which a psalm is described, as *Shîr*, "a song," *Mizmôr*, "a psalm," denoting that it was to be sung with instrumental accompaniment; *Michtam* (LXX. στηλογραφία), perhaps "a golden poem"; or "a mystery," a song of deep spiritual import; *Maskil*, "a skilfully constructed ode" (LXX. συνέσεως, εἰς σύνεσιν), a meaning which seems to be required by the use of the word in the body of a psalm (xlvii. 7 [8]), where it must mean "in a skilful strain," or "a skilfully constructed song;" *Shiggaion*, "perhaps a dithyrambic ode," as being irregular in form or metre. But this and other explanations are very doubtful, as we have in Hab. iii., "*Upon Shiggionoth*," which may, however, denote that the song was to be sung "after the manner of dithyrambs" or "to dithyrambic measures." Compare the expressions "Upon Alamoth," "Upon the Sheminith (or octave)."

(*b*) The instruments which were to be employed when the psalm was sung in the Temple service: "*Upon Nehiloth*" (inscription of Psalm v.), "To the flutes," or with flute accompaniment;* "On *Neginath*" (Psalms iv., vi., liv., lv., lxvii., lxxvi.), *i.e.* "with accompaniment of stringed instruments;" and similarly, though with a slight variation of form, in Psalm lxi.

(*c*) Particular tones or measures to which the psalm was to be sung. *On Alamoth* (Psalm xlvi.), "after the manner of maidens;" and *Upon Sheminith* (vi. xii.), "upon the octave" (found also in the historical books, 1 Chron. xv. 20), the former referring, it has been conjectured, to the women's voices—maidens we know joining in the singing and music of the service (Psalm lxviii. 25)—and the latter to the bass voices upon the (lower) octave; *Upon Gittith* (Psalm viii.), "after the manner of Gath," some measure or style which the Hebrews had borrowed from their Philistine neighbours in that city; *To Jeduthun* (xxxix.) or *Upon Jeduthun*, "after the manner of Jeduthun," one of David's famous singers.

(*d*) Besides these notices, there are several others which probably indicate the first word of other, apparently secular, poems

* It has been objected to this explanation that it is not likely that wind instruments would be employed in sacred music as an accompaniment to the singing, but Delitzsch has observed that the use of the flute in divine worship is attested by Is. xxx. 29 (cf. 1 Sam. x. 5; 1 Kings i. 40). In the second Temple, on twelve days in the year, the "Hallel" was sung to the accompaniment of flutes. See Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms* (Eng. trans.), part i., pp. 43, 155.

to the airs of which particular psalms were commonly sung. There is nothing incredible in this. In the sixteenth century Clement Marot's metrical translations of the Psalms in French were often sung to popular airs. Reuss tells us that he has himself heard in missions organised by the Jesuits, after the restoration of the monarchy in France, religious hymns sung to the airs of the operas then in vogue. What more natural than that something of the same kind should have taken place in Jerusalem, where, as we know, singing and music were the constant accompaniments of banquets (see *e.g.* Is. v. 12; Am. vi. 5, viii. 10), and where there must consequently have been a large number of secular songs, every trace of which has disappeared except so far as they have been preserved in these titles. Thus, for instance, in the inscription of Psalm xxii., we have (see Revised Version) "set to Aijeleth hash-Shahar," that is "the hind of the morning," because it was set to the same music as some song beginning with those words. So again in Psalm xlv. we have "set to Shoshannim," that is "lilies," the song beginning with the word lilies. Or again Psalm lvi. the melody was one which was originally that of a song beginning, "The silent dove of far off (lands)," or as others interpret, "The dove of the distant terebinths." Or yet again, as in Psalm lviii. the melody was borrowed from a vintage song, the words "Al tash-heth," "Destroy not," being perhaps the first words of the song of which we may have a further trace, as Dr. Robertson Smith suggests, in the Prophet Isaiah (lxv. 8), "When the new wine is found in the cluster, men say, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.'" But as regards all these musical notices we must speak with due reserve. They were enigmas even to the Septuagint translators, and the most recent investigations have added nothing to our knowledge.

(*e*) The same may be said of another musical sign, the word Selah, which does not indeed occur in the inscriptions but in the body of the psalm. It occurs most commonly at the end of a strophe, but sometimes in the middle of a verse, and even where it interrupts the sense, as *e.g.* in lv. 19 [20], lxvii. 7 [8], 33 [34]. The LXX. translate it by διάψαλμα, evidently supposing that it denoted the intervention at the particular place of a musical symphony. The voices ceased and the musical instruments alone were heard. The word, derived from a root signifying "to lift up," was intended as a direction to the musicians to strike up in a louder strain. Of the many interpretations which have been given of the word, this seems on the whole the most probable.

14. *The Psalms as a Collection of Religious Poetry.*—The Psalms

are a phenomenon unique in literature; there is no other collection of sacred poetry in the world that can be compared with them. The Psalter indeed is not one book, but many. It consists not of one but of several collections of hymns and spiritual songs put together at various times. It covers a period of well nigh a thousand years, from David, the great master of Jewish song, down, perhaps, to the last great struggle for national independence in the time of the Maccabees. It covers a still wider space if the 90th Psalm was written, as its title indicates, by Moses, and indeed that psalm must be in any case of very considerable antiquity. The Psalter is thus the marvellous record of human hearts pouring themselves out from age to age and from century to century in communion with God. It traverses all the vicissitudes of human life. It is both national and personal. It sings the praises of God in nature and in grace. It goes down into the deepest depths of human anguish; it soars to the highest heights of human joy. But, above all, the Psalms glow with a depth and tenderness of personal affection towards God such as has never been surpassed even in the hymns of the Christian Church.

In prayer and praise God and man draw nigh one to the other; and the Psalms have this distinctive feature, and it is to be found in all of them, they are true in their representation of God, true in their representation of man's heart and man's needs and aspirations.

(i.) They are true in their representation of God. It is the same God who is the stay of all their hearts. It is not as in heathen prayers and hymns, a number of different and rival deities who are the objects of worship and praise; it is the One God, Elohim or Jehovah, whom all alike adore. The names may be different, the Being is one. Who is this God who thus binds them to Himself? Who is this God for whom words seem too weak to express His glory or to celebrate His lovingkindness? He is the God who has revealed Himself to them and to their fathers, and taken them into His holy covenant. He is not like the gods of the heathen, the impersonation of the powers of Nature, or the merely exaggerated image of degraded and profligate men. The gods of the heathen were, at the best, gods of the wood and the river and the sea, gods of the winds and the storms and the sunrise; and too often were monsters of cruelty and lust and passion and vindictiveness, beings whom men supposed they could propitiate by sacrifice and offerings, but beings, like themselves, capricious, revengeful, licentious, such as no true heart could honour, much less adore and love.

But the God of the Psalms is not only one, He is not only the

absolute Ruler and King of the universe, not only the God to whose glory all creation bears witness, who has made the sun and the moon and the stars, who has established the round world that it cannot be moved, in whose hand are the deep places of the earth and the heights of the mountains are His, who covereth the heavens with clouds and prepareth rain for the earth, who giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens that cry—not only the Lord of Nature, full of power and majesty, but also the God of holiness and righteousness and truth, who will be honoured and worshipped by his reasonable creatures in truth and holiness and righteousness.

This is no projection of man's understanding, no invention of man's heart. The conception is far too pure and too lofty. God in His dwelling-place above and in His temple upon earth is a holy God, a God who hateth iniquity and with whom evil cannot dwell. And yet He is not a God who repels His creatures. He is full of tender pity and condescension. He listens to the cry of the penitent heart, He is the helper of all that are oppressed, "the Father of the fatherless and the God of the widow, even God in His holy habitation." "He bears our burdens, He forgives our iniquities, He heals our diseases, He crowns us with lovingkindness and tender mercies." "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy towards them that fear Him." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

This is no unknown or distant God. There is no doubt in the minds of any of the psalmists of Israel as to the object of worship, no question, as in the refrain of a well-known Vedic hymn, "Who is the God to whom I shall offer sacrifice?" Jesus Christ our Lord has indeed brought God nearer to us, because He, the Eternal Son, has manifested the Father in human flesh, so that He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Nevertheless, it is the same God who was the joy of the hearts of Hebrew psalmists; and the fact remains that with all the bright illumination of the Christian revelation, the words of Hebrew psalmists are still used in all churches and in all lands as the best expression of Christian adoration, whether in the closet or in the congregation.

(ii.) And this also because they are the true and adequate expression of human needs and desires and aspirations. Hence their permanence; and this it is that is so striking. These are no dead echoes from the past, no curiosities of an extinct literature. They are not like the Vedic hymns or the hymns of the Avesta, with which they have sometimes been compared—relics of a bygone age, telling indeed of human longings and aspira-

tions, of a feeling after God if haply they might find Him, but never striking deep root even in the heart of the nation for whom they were written, far less evoking any sentiment of awe and worship in other nations.

The Psalms live and breathe. They are not the deserted shrines of a cold and extinguished worship, altars on which no flame of devotion any longer burns. Empires have risen and perished; the face of the world has changed again and again; Christianity has succeeded to Judaism; even Jewish history and Jewish prophecy do not always hold us under their spell; but the Psalms have a fascination from which we cannot escape. They appeal to our Christian conscience and our Christian emotions. They are the best expression of our feelings in our purest and healthiest moments. They never grow old. They inspire, direct, control our hearts at all times; they answer to all our moods. The joys, the sorrows, the penitence, the fear, the doubt, the trust, the despair, the triumph, all are ours. There is not a note of the human harp, not one of its myriad strings, which does not find its response there. The words are the words we want; they are written for us. And this, because they are the true utterances of human hearts, taught by the Spirit of God, because His hand has swept the strings and brought out their fitful yet harmonious music. What other explanation can be given of this phenomenon? All is real here. There is no exaggeration, no gloss, none of that unhealthy sentimentalism which so often disfigures mediæval hymns and modern hymns which imitate them, the sickly effusions of a morbid religious feeling with which a manly heart can have no sympathy.

The Psalms are real. It is not that they are not full of poetry. They abound in magnificent poetry. They lay all nature under contribution for splendid images and bold comparisons. They have a wealth of beauty in which they are not surpassed by the poets of any nation. But it is the poetry of truth. Man's heart as it is, not as he would make it out to be, finds here its exact expression. And therefore the Psalms can never grow old. They are fresh now, as fresh as they were some two or three thousand years ago. Hence it is that we use them in our services day by day; hence it is that we love them and meditate on them and pray them, and find no other book in the world so helpful to us in our daily communing with God. Is there any reasonable, any probable, any possible explanation of the fact but this, that the Spirit of God, who knows man's heart, breathed on the hearts of them that wrote, and thereby made their words the perpetual measure and adequate expression of all true prayer and praise?

15. *The Imprecations in the Psalms.*—Although the Psalms have been an abiding element in all Christian worship, it must be admitted that there are some tones in the Psalter which seem to jar upon our feelings, which do not naturally or readily adapt themselves to Christian sentiment. There is an outburst ever and anon of vindictive joy, there is an exultation in the overthrow of the wicked, as in the 58th Psalm: "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly." There is an almost savage delight in the destruction of the oppressor, as in the 137th Psalm: "Happy shall he be that taketh thy little ones and dasheth them against the stones." There are withering imprecations, as in the 69th and the 109th Psalms, so fierce and so elaborately wrought that it makes one's blood run cold to read them. How are we to account for them? We take them on our lips. They are retained in Christian liturgies. On what principle can we justify their retention?

(i.) Some persons would say, They are relics of a barbarous age, evidences of a moral standard infinitely below that of the Gospel, and therefore quite unsuitable for Christian worship.

(ii.) Others have attempted to justify the repetition of these psalms in public worship and in private meditation by applying the language to the spiritual struggles of the Christian. The enemies we have to face are not persecutors or tyrants such as the oppressors of Israel were against whom the Psalmists utter their burning words, but spiritual foes. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Accordingly the language of the Psalmists is to be turned from its original sense into a spiritual channel. Those vehement scathing words may be a prayer for the defeat of Satan and his hosts, or for the subjugation of fleshly lusts which war against the soul. So for instance in the 137th Psalm, some of the Fathers and expositors who follow them expound "Babylon" as meaning "the flesh." The "little ones" are "fleshly lusts" in the earlier stages of their assaults whilst they are yet young, as it were, and before they have gathered strength, and "the stones" are to be interpreted of "the rock," which is Christ, against which they are to be dashed and so destroyed.

Fanciful and arbitrary interpretations of this kind are really no interpretations at all. And how is it possible to carry out such a principle of interpretation consistently? How in our spiritual warfare could we adopt with any definite meaning such words

as these: "Set thou an ungodly man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand;" "Let his prayer be turned into sin;" "Let him be blotted out of the book of life," and the like? The unnatural strain which must be put upon words to make them fit into such a system of exegesis ought long ago to have led expositors to abandon it.

(iii.) Others again would regard these psalms as predictive. They remind us that the 69th Psalm is again and again quoted in the New Testament as having its fulfilment in the circumstances of our Lord's earthly life or in the history of the Church; that words from the 69th Psalm (ver. 25), and the 109th Psalm (ver. 8), are referred to by St. Peter as "the Scripture which must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas." Hence instead of saying, "Let their table become a snare," "Let their habitation be made desolate," "Let them be blotted out of the book of life," &c., these interpreters would have us render, "Their table shall become a snare;" "Their habitation shall be desolate;" "They shall be blotted out of the book of life," &c.

But even if the laws of Hebrew grammar did not forbid such a rendering as the substitution of the future for the expression of a wish, it must be observed that there are imperatives which cannot be so explained: "Pour out thine indignation upon them," "Add iniquity to their iniquity," and the like. And in any case how can we put words like these into the mouth of our Blessed Lord in the hour of His passion? It was indeed true of Him, as it had been of some saint of old, that "when He was thirsty they gave Him vinegar to drink" (Psalm lxix. 21); but who can for a moment believe that thoughts of awful vengeance such as those in the psalm dwelt in the heart of the Divine Sufferer, whose every word from the cross was a word of tenderest pity and love, who did not condemn even the unrepentant robber, who prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"?

(iv.) An ingenious attempt has indeed been made in the 109th Psalm, where the imprecations are the most awful, and the most elaborately drawn out, to escape from the difficulty by putting them into the mouth of the Psalmist's enemies and regarding them as directed against himself. At the end of the 4th verse we are to supply the word "saying," which is not uncommonly omitted in Hebrew poetry (*e.g.* Psalm ii. 2, xxii. 7), and to read it thus: "They have rewarded me evil for good and hatred for my good will; *saying*, Set thou an ungodly man over him," and so on through the whole string of anathemas, to ver. 20, where the Psalmist, having thus quoted the words of his enemies, com-

forts himself with the thought, "This is the reward of mine enemies from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul." And it is urged in support of this interpretation that whereas the Psalmist speaks of his enemies throughout in the plural (ver. 1—5, 20 to end of the psalm), they on the other hand, speaking of him in the intermediate passage, always use the singular.*

But the admission of such an explanation, if it turns the edge of the difficulty in this particular instance, leaves all the others of a like kind untouched. We have not got rid of the imprecations of the 69th Psalm, nor of the fierce exultation at the overthrow of cruel and powerful oppressors which meets us in the passages already quoted from the 58th and 137th Psalms.

(v.) To arrive at a true explanation of the difficulty we must endeavour to realise the exact position of the Jewish Psalmists. In the first place, they are not influenced by *personal* hatred. They are the mouthpiece of injured innocence. These are the accents, the natural accents, of the martyr church. The righteous are almost synonymous with the afflicted. The people of God are in so many of the psalms crushed, bowed down, mourning all the day long because of the oppression of the enemy. The enemies may be foreign tyrants, or they may be ungodly men in Israel, but in either case they are men who have obtained power and are using that power unscrupulously to oppress and destroy the faithful worshippers of Jehovah. And it is an intolerable thing to see high-handed wickedness triumphing, and to be powerless to arrest it. The true heart, on the side of God, rises up against this hateful insolence. It does long, and it does pray, for the rooting out of evil and the destruction of evil-doers. And the Psalmists give utterance to this feeling with the more intensity and the more eagerness because, the awful retributions of the future life being to a great extent hidden from their eyes, they longed to see God's justice manifested in this world in the righteous punishment of the wicked.

But, in the next place, we must frankly admit that the Old Testament stands on a lower level as regards the forgiveness of injuries than the New. Our Lord Himself draws the distinction: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." He warned His disciples, when, like Elijah, they would have called down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who refused to

* This is the interpretation of Kennicott and Mendelssohn, and it has been defended recently by Dr. Taylor, *The Gospel in the Law*, and by Rev. J. Hammond in the *Expositor*.

receive Him, that they knew not what spirit they were of. "He, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." His lesson to them was, "Forgive not until seven times, but until seventy-times seven." The Psalms do not inculcate the duty of forgiveness of all personal wrongs, or that clear distinction between the sinner and the sin, which is so emphatically characteristic of the New Testament. But ought we to expect it? The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, but it is inferior to it. And this inferiority, this imperfection, is no proof that the Psalms are not inspired because they contain these execrations; unless we regard it as an essential condition of inspiration that it should lift the subjects of it altogether above their own time and people. It was necessary that the stern sense of righteous detestation of all wrong should be planted in men's hearts, even if its harsher forms were afterwards to be softened by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Nor must it be forgotten that even in the New Testament we find traces of the same righteous indignation. No doubt the Gospel teaches a larger charity. No doubt it forbids all personal resentment. But St. Paul when opposed in his ministry by a wicked man could find satisfaction in the thought that the Lord would reward him according to his works, and could exclaim against those whose false teaching wrought havoc in the Church, "I would they were cut off that trouble you." And St. John could bid his little children refuse to receive a false teacher into their houses. And St. Jude could write a whole epistle full of denunciation of ungodly men. And the seer of the Apocalyptic vision could write of the fall of Babylon, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged in her the blood of them that were slain upon the earth."

But although so far as the sense of righteous indignation is concerned the Psalms are not out of harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, still there is nothing in the New Testament like the elaborately wrought, detailed, and terrible anathemas of the Psalms, and it would not be lawful for us as Christians now to pray, "Oh that thou wouldest slay the wicked, O God;" or, "Add iniquity unto their iniquity;" "Let their prayers be turned into sin;" "Blot them out of the book of life."

16. *The Messianic Psalms.*—There is one other subject of considerable interest connected with the theological aspect of the Psalms which must not be passed over. It is surely a striking fact that of all the quotations which in the New Testament are made from the Old touching Christ and His kingdom, nearly

one-half are drawn from the Psalms. The Psalms then are predictive; the poet is a prophet. Such psalms as the 2nd, the 20th, the 21st, the 45th, the 72nd, the 110th, where a king is the object; or such psalms as the 16th, the 22nd, the 40th, the 69th, where a prophet or a servant of God who is a sufferer for righteousness' sake are portrayed, are all quoted in the New Testament as having their fulfilment in Christ.

Yet there are expressions in some of these psalms—as in the 40th, where there is a confession of sin, "Mine iniquities are more in number than the hairs of my head;" as in the 16th, where the poet exclaims, "Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, neither take up their names (those of idols) in my lips;" as in the 69th, where the sufferer breaks forth, as has been already said, into burning imprecations—which certainly cannot be regarded as suitable on the lips of our Lord. How are we to explain these? How is it that whilst we find in these psalms words which the New Testament writers put into the mouth of our Lord or tell us are fulfilled in Him, there are yet other words which cannot possibly find such an application? Only on the principle that prophets and kings of old were types, and consequently imperfect adumbrations, of the Christ who was to come.

They spoke out their own feelings, and hence the strictly human element in their poems; but as foreshadowing the true Prophet and the true King they were carried beyond themselves. One higher and fairer than any son of man was before their eyes and in their hearts as inspired seers. Christ is in the Psalms. Who can read the 22nd Psalm without seeing there the marvellous portrait of the Divine Sufferer? The words express the real feelings of some suffering saint of God or of the suffering nation, but they go far beyond their first occasion. Where, indeed, in the world shall we find anything approaching to this exact correspondence between prophecy and fulfilment? Even in the Gospel itself we scarcely behold so consoling a vision of the crucified Redeemer as in this psalm, written centuries before He appeared upon earth.

Looking then at the Psalter as a great collection of sacred poetry, we may sum up its power and its teaching in the words of Luther.

First, as he says: "A finer book of the lives and legends of the saints has never appeared on the earth, nor ever can appear. For if we were to desire that out of all the lives, legends, and histories the best were picked out and brought together and set forth to the best advantage; why the book thus produced would be just the Psalter we now have."

And next: "The Psalter ought to be precious and dear to us were it for nothing else but the clear promise that it holds forth respecting Christ's death and resurrection, and the prefiguration of His kingdom and of the whole state and system of Christianity; insomuch that it might be well entitled a Little Bible, wherein everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended and compacted into an enchiridion or manual. . . . It seems to me as if the Holy Ghost had been pleased to take on Himself the trouble of putting together such a Bible, or book of exemplars, touching the whole of Christianity or all the saints; in order that they who are unable to read the whole Bible may nevertheless find almost the whole sum comprehended in this little book."

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

1. *Constituent Parts.*—The Book of Proverbs consists of the following parts:—

(i.) The preface, chap. i. 1—7, which gives the title and indicates the design of the collection: "The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction . . . to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion . . . that he may understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their dark sayings." This is followed by the fundamental maxim of the Wisdom: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

(ii.) This general preface is followed by a long passage, chap. i. 8; ix. 18, which consists, not of detached proverbs, but of connected discourses in praise of Wisdom, and the benefits which she confers upon those who embrace her. The speaker is one of the wise, or a type of them, who addresses his youthful pupil or friend as "my son," though at several places Wisdom herself is introduced speaking, displaying her graces, offering herself to men, narrating her history, and magnifying the delights which she confers on those who follow her, as well as the evils from which she preserves them. This passage includes the singular personification of Wisdom in chap. viii., one of the most remarkable and beautiful things in Hebrew literature.

(iii.) Then follows the largest section in the book, chap. x. 1—xxii. 16, with a new heading, "The Proverbs of Solomon." This division consists of three hundred and seventy-four verses, each of which contains a single proverb or maxim in two lines, with the exception of the verse chap. xix. 7, which has three lines, owing probably to some early fault in the text. The kind of poetical parallelism most common in these verses is the antithetic, of this type:—

> "A wise son maketh a glad father:
> But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (x. 1).

This type of verse prevails almost exclusively in chaps. x.—xv., after which other types are more commonly introduced, as the synonymous—

> "Pride goeth before destruction,
> And a haughty spirit before a fall" (xvi. 18),

and others. The proverbs in this collection are of a very miscellaneous character, and follow one another without any classification or regard to subject, although occasionally a few consecutive verses refer to a common topic. Sometimes two proverbs occur having the first member the same (x. 15; xviii. 11), while the second is different, and in others the first member is different while the second is identical (xv. 33; xviii. 12). This peculiarity shows that many of the proverbs had circulated for a long time orally before they were gathered together in a written form.

(iv.) Then comes a collection which has been formed out of two small pieces put together. The author of the first piece, chap. xxii. 67—xxiv. 22, informs his son or disciple that what he addresses to him is, "Words of the Wise;" and the second small code, chap. xxiv. 23—24, is inscribed, "These are also by the Wise," that is, by anonymous proverbialists. The proverbs in this collection sometimes make one verse, sometimes two or three, and sometimes extend to a short proverbial discourse.

(v.) This small code is followed by an important collection, chaps. xxv.—xxix., with the inscription, "These also are Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out" (xxv. 1). The expression "copied out" or "transferred" seems to imply that the men of Hezekiah formed their collection out of written sources. Hezekiah, besides being a wise and reforming king, appears to have been a poet (Is. xxxviii.), and his "men" were no doubt scholars and scribes who shared his literary tastes, and whom he employed to rescue from oblivion the precious remains of the ancient wisdom by transferring them from the small collections in which they lay concealed into a single code (2 Kings xviii. 37). The maxims in this code, particularly in chaps. xxv.—xxvii., approach nearer to what we should imagine the early popular proverb to have been than many of those in the other large collection, and probably the collection has preserved some of the most ancient proverbs.

(vi.) Two small pieces then follow, related to one another, chaps. xxx. and xxxi. 1—9. The superscriptions to these pieces

are obscure. Probably in both cases the suggestions of the Revised Version margin should be adopted, and chap. xxx. 1—2, read: "The words of Jakeh of Massa: the man said, I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God, and am consumed; surely I am more brutish than any man," &c. The words are those of one who has striven to find out God unto perfection and found the task above him (Ps. lxxiii. 22, Job. xxviii.). In like manner chap. xxxi. 1 would read: "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him." (The word *massa*, if a common noun, means "oracle," as in the Revised Version text; in Gen. xxv. 14, it occurs as a proper name). The language in these two passages has an Aramean tinge, and they may have been drawn from abroad.

(vii.) Finally the book is closed by an acrostic or alphabetical poem on the "virtuous," that is, the good or capable wife, chap. xxxi. 10—31.

2. *Literary Character.*—The Proverbs belong to that department of Hebrew literature called the Wisdom, which in addition includes Ecclesiastes, Job, and some Psalms, as xxxvii., xlix., and lxxiii. This literature is the fruit of a direction of mind in Israel frequently alluded to. The "wise" were a class about as well known as priests and prophets. It is the purpose of the Book of Proverbs to give the young man knowledge, "that he may understand the words of the Wise and their dark sayings." The opponents of Jeremiah, who trusted to others than the prophet for direction, said: "Come, and let us devise devices against him; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the Wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. xviii. 18). This peculiar kind of reflection which produced the Wisdom was not confined to Israel. In 1 Kings iv. 30, it is said of Solomon that "his wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt; for he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol." Teman in Edom was famed for its wisdom: "Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?" (Jer. xlix. 7, Obad 8).

Some of the negative characteristics of the Wisdom best indicate its peculiarities. Though sacrifice, for example, be once or twice alluded to, little importance is attached to the ritual system; the priest is not once mentioned, and the external exercise of worship appears to have little significance. But singularly the wise man differs as much from the prophet as he does from the lawgiver. All those ideas that specially charac-

terise prophecy are absent, such as the idea of a Kingdom of God, of a chosen people, of a Messiah or future King of the house of David, and others. The distinction between "Israel" and the "Gentiles" is not alluded to. The familiar phraseology of the prophets, "Israel," "Jacob," "Zion," "my people," "the day of the Lord," the revelation of his "glory," in a word, the whole of the language of "particularism," the idea that Israel is the peculiar people of the Lord, so characteristic of prophecy and many of the Psalms, nowhere appears. The conflict between the true worship of Jehovah and that of false gods, with which the pages of the prophets are filled, does not receive even a passing reference.

3. "*The Wise.*"—More than one suggestion has been made to account for these peculiarities of the "wise." One suggestion made is entirely without warrant. It has been argued that the "wise" were men whose way of thinking placed them outside of their dispensation and in antagonism to the circle of particularistic beliefs cherished by the prophets; in short, that they took up a humanistic or naturalistic position. A position to which the name "naturalistic" could be given is not conceivable in Israel; and there is nothing in the Proverbs to indicate any antagonism on the part of the wise either to priest or prophet. The passage (chap. iii. 9), "Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of thine increase," shows their friendliness to the ritual; while the other saying, "Where there is no vision (prophetic revelation, 1 Sam. iii. 1) the people cast off restraint" (chap. xxix. 18), is proof enough of their esteem of prophecy; and the frequent references to the "law," *i.e.* revelation, the "commandment," the "word," show that their thoughts all moved within the sphere of the revealed religion.

The wise men had no unfriendliness to the institutions or public teachers of Israel; they occupied themselves, however, more with the life of the individual than of the community, and sought to distil from the teaching of the prophets, directed to their own people, general principles which, both in morals and religion, should be universally applicable. Still this universalism, acknowledged to be a peculiarity of the teaching of the wise, is a remarkable thing, and a different attempt has been made to explain it. It has been suggested that the literature of the Wisdom is late, chiefly post-Exile, and that the want of allusions to the State is due to the fact that there was now no State, only a community. The wise are the successors of the prophets, whose particularistic teaching has now lost its meaning, inasmuch as the State has perished, but whose great religious and moral truths remain, and it is the task which the wise set before

themselves to impress these truths on every member of the community.

This suggestion leaves much unexplained, and can hardly be considered satisfactory. For, first, it is certain that the class of "wise" men existed long before the Exile, and it is probable that remains of their activity should have been preserved; and undoubtedly the national tradition, as we see it reflected in the Book of Job, was that the moral wisdom was of antiquity far beyond memory. Again, though Israel was only a community after the Exile, it is certain that the national feeling remained as strong as ever, and the sense of the high privileges of "Israel" and its distinction from the "Gentiles" even grew in intensity, so that the peculiarities of the Wisdom are as difficult to explain at this time as at any other. It is at this period also that the "law" was most rigidly observed, and yet allusions to the ceremonial are entirely wanting in the Proverbs; a fact which becomes the more remarkable when it is remembered how often the author of Ecclesiasticus, who lived at this period, extols the "law," and insists upon its observance.

And, finally, many of the proverbs are of such a kind that they cannot have been spoken first in the post-Exile period, for example, the one already quoted: "Where no vision is the people cast off restraint" (xxix. 18). This can hardly belong to a time when prophecy had ceased. The frequent references to the "king" also suggest that the proverbs belong to the time of the monarchy, *e.g.* "My son, fear the Lord and the king" (xxiv. 21; cf. 1 Kings xxi. 10); and such a sentiment as this, "A divine sentence is on the lips of the king; his mouth shall not transgress in judgment" (xvi. 10), seems to take us back to the more ancient times in Israel, when the king actually judged causes in person (cf. xvi. 12; xx. 8). The conclusion from all this is that the historical tradition of the existence of these wise men during the whole history of Israel is to be relied on. The prophets generally arose only at great crises in the State, the "wise" pursued a calmer method, and as "reprovers" and monitors are frequently alluded to by the prophets themselves (Hos. iv. 4; Am. v. 10).

4. *Hebrew Conception of Wisdom.*—The fundamental idea of the Hebrew Wisdom is that the world is a moral constitution. Under all its phenomena and within all the history of men and all the events of the individual's life, there is a living God fulfilling Himself, His thoughts, and His will. The sacred philosopher did not rise up through nature and life unto God, he came down from God upon the world and life; he did not discover God from observing the world, he recognised Him everywhere in the world.

It was this that made his study of life so fascinating, and gave unity to it. And it was not life merely on its religious but particularly on its mental side, as an embodiment of sense or intelligence, that attracted him, for underneath every aspect of it there was a divine reality or thought, upon which it was his delight to lay his finger.

The wise man, however, does not merely observe life and give a dispassionate photograph of men and their conduct; he is a teacher, and passes judgment. Yet his observations are always good-natured, and never betray dislike of his fellow-men. He walks through the bazaars and observes the methods of Oriental marketing. "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way then he boasteth" (xx. 14). Or he observes how our natural selfishness cuts into us somewhat deeper, and describes it with a certain kindly sarcasm: "All the brothers of the poor man do hate him; much more will his neighbours go far from him" (xix. 7). Sometimes his expressions border on humour, as when he makes the sluggard express his deadly terror of labour by his cry, "There is a lion in the road! a lion in the streets!" (xxvi. 13); or describes him as too tired to lift his hand from the dish to his mouth, or too lazy to wash that which he took in hunting (xxvi. 15).

But usually he shows a kindly sympathy with the feelings of every sentient creature, which descends even to the lower creation. "A merciful man regards the natural desires of his beast" (xii. 10). Thence every emotion and natural feeling of the individual is of interest, and he sympathises with it, whether sorrow or joy: "Sorrow in the heart of a man bears him down" (xii. 25); and, on the other hand, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (xvii. 22). And he is delicate enough to perceive that however grateful the sympathy of others is to us ordinarily, there are times when we must be left alone with our own feelings. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy" (xiv. 10). Yet, on the other hand, we live in one another, we stretch out our hands to the future, and sometimes the "half of our soul" embarks on the sea or wanders in distant lands, and we long to know how he fares. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (xiii. 12); "A good report maketh the bones fat" (xv. 30); and "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (xxv. 25).

Nothing human is alien to the wise man; he is philanthropic in every sense. And all the broad distinctions created by God, as man and woman, father and child, youth and old age, he dwells upon as each beautiful in its place, and seizes on that

in each which constitutes its charm. "A gracious woman attains to honour, as strong men attain to wealth" (xi. 10); that indescribable delicacy in women which is the complement of strength in man, and secures her her place, the philosopher signalises at once, and almost with rudeness indicates that beauty cannot compensate for the want of it: "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is beauty in a woman without discretion" (xi. 22). Similarly, "The glory of young men is their strength; the glory of old men is the grey head" (xx. 29). Why the glory of old men is the hoary head is explained elsewhere: "The hoary head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness" (xvi. 31), for "the fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (x. 27).

5. *The Sense of God's Presence.*—If now, passing from the beauty and charm of all the forms of individual life, we inquire how the individual should bear himself, what habits of mind he should cherish, we enter the region of duty, and touch on the fundamental idea of the Wisdom, that all is of God. The prevailing feeling in the mind should be the fear of the Lord, and out of this will grow the other states of mind that are right. One of the first of these will be humility, not as a temperament, but as a religious condition of the mind before God. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame" (xi. 2). "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour and life" (xxii. 4); "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (xx. 9.)

This abiding sense of God's presence will reveal itself in the whole life, in a general gravity of deportment, in self-restraint, in thoughtful consideration and slowness to speak, and even in a dignified manner of speech, unlike the levity and want of thought and hasty talk of the fool. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly" (xiv. 17); "An equal temper is the life of the flesh, but keenness of mind is the rottenness of the bones" (xiv. 30); "He that is slow to anger is greater than a hero, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (xvi. 32); "The heart of the righteous meditates in order to answer, but the mouth of the wicked bubbleth over with evil things" (xv. 28); "The tongue of the righteous gracefully uttereth knowledge, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (xv. 2); "Wise men reserve knowledge, but the mouth of the fool is an imminent downfall" (x. 14).

On another side this sense of the nearness of God stimulated to activity and diligence. Man's task was to bring himself into harmony with God, whom he felt to be everywhere present, and

to realise His purpose. Hence the encomiums passed on diligence: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" "Love not sleep lest thou come to poverty;" "In all labour there is gain" (x. 4; xx. 13; xiv. 23).

Of course it is in intercourse with men that the disposition can best be seen, and must be judged. The disposition required, to state it in a single word, is charity, philanthropy in the widest sense. Nothing is more beautiful than the considerate kindliness of the wise man. Looking abroad upon all the classes of men his eye alights upon the poor, with compassion for the unrelieved monotony of their life, in which there are no good and bad days as in that of other men: "All the days of the poor are bad" (xv. 15), and he puts in a plea for their kindly treatment: "He that hath mercy on the poor happy is he" (xiv. 21).

Nay, regarding the various orders of society as the creation of God, he who disdains any of them seems to him to slight Jehovah himself: "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker," while, on the other hand, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again" (xiv. 31; xix. 17). But the bearing of each man among his fellow-men should be characterised by a wide human goodness. In the presence of others he will be courteous: "A soft answer turneth away wrath." He esteems others highly: "He who despiseth his neighbour is a fool" (xi. 12). And should evil rumours regarding others reach his ear he will give them no further currency. "He that divulges a slander is a fool" (x. 18). In a word, he looks with kindly consideration on all men, and makes allowance for their faults: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins" (x. 12).

6. *Moral Scope of the Book.*—It has sometimes been said that the motive set before men in the Proverbs when they are exhorted to strive after wisdom is not a lofty one, being usually material well-being. The answer to this charge is that it is by no means universally true, and where it is true it is largely explained by differences between Hebrew modes of thinking and our own. When Wisdom says—

> "My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold,
> And my revenue than choice silver" (viii. 19),

she is conscious of offering men something more precious than material well-being.

And even when material good is presented as the reward of wisdom it must be remembered that material good had a larger meaning to the Hebrew than to us. For, first, he did not draw

that distinction between the "soul," or spiritual side of our nature, and all other sides which we draw; the whole "man" in its unity was the subject which had to be satisfied; and this required a material sphere and material blessings. And, secondly, as all these blessings came directly from the hand of God, and His presence was recognised in them, they had a sort of sacramental meaning to the ancient saint; they were the tokens and seal to him of God's favour, and needful to assure him that he possessed it. His fundamental idea, that the universe was a moral constitution, led him to see moral principles always realised in the external world, and this was so much the case, that when adversity befell him he saw in it the anger of God. And it is here, no doubt, that is found the explanation of the absence of any formal doctrine of immortality in the Proverbs, and any idea of "another world."

To the Hebrew mind God was in every phenomenon and in every event in the universe; He was present in the whole life of man, and there could be no "other" world. The world was one and God filled it. It was not defect but excess of religion that postponed so long the doctrine of immortality. Only when death called men away from the enjoyment of God's presence here, or when great miseries and the evils of life taught them that full blessedness in His fellowship could not be enjoyed on earth, or when a deepening sense of sin convinced them that that purity of heart needful to see God could not be attained in the present conditions of life—only then did the thought of another sphere of life with God arise and grow into clearness. When, however, such a statement is made in Proverbs as this:

> "In the way of righteousness is life,
> And the pathway thereof is immortality" (xii. 28),

it would be a very superficial reading that found nothing more in it than a reference to occasions of danger in a man's life. It is the statement of a principle; and other parts of revelation show how the principle is to be reconciled with facts, such as that of death, which seem to contradict it.

7. *God's World-Plan.*—It has been said that the fundamental conception of the Wisdom is that the world, including the life of man, is a moral constitution, in all the phenomena of which God is present and realising Himself. All things are but the innumerable reflections, infinitely various in their colours, of one great divine idea. This idea, however, is especially reflected in the social order and moral life of man. The single proverbs exhibit in a great variety of ways individual illustrations of this. But in chaps. i.—ix., the general idea of God's world-plan or

world-conception, particularly on its moral side, is seized and personified and presented as a Being, Wisdom herself. This figure, chaste and beautiful, with the serenity of order upon her face, and truth and religion in her eyes, the divine Wisdom which may also become man's, is set forth in contrast with Folly who too often takes the shape of the "strange woman" or the brigand murderer who lurks in the thickets (chaps. i., vii.).

The traits of this exquisite picture of Wisdom are borrowed from a hundred sources, from the moral conditions of the time, from the usages of the religious teachers of the day, from the social order and public life in the city; yet not from these as superficial phenomena, unsubstantial shadows that come and go, but as all of them expressions of an invisible whole, the moral framework of the human economy, image of the mind of God. It is in chap. viii. where this personification attains its most brilliant form. First, (1—3) Wisdom is introduced as a public teacher, and the places are described where she takes her stand and speaks. She stands on the "high places," the Temple heights, where the crowds may be addressed as they pass; or at the gates, where justice was dispensed, and life was most intense. Then (4—11) Wisdom herself speaks, naming those whom she desires to hear her, and to whom she offers herself:—

> "Unto you, O men, I call;
> And my voice is unto the sons of men. . . .
> Receive my instruction and not silver;
> And knowledge rather than choice gold."

Then, 12—31, she states how she manifests herself:—

> "I, Wisdom, indwell in prudence,
> Counsel is mine and sound wisdom:
> I am understanding; I have power.
> In me kings rule, and princes decree justice.
> In me princes are princes, and rulers all the judges of the earth."

Prudence is a form in which Wisdom reveals herself. That society is organised, that intelligence and rule are exercised, that there are offices and officers dispensing right—these things are embodiments of her. She is the substratum of intelligence and of godliness, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: "pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate." And then, having said that she was ready to bestow herself on them who had received her—"I love them who love me"—her own image seems to fill her mind, and she speaks of her own past, when she was alone with God, or ever the earth was; when she was His workman in creation, which was but herself taking shape in the magical play of her power:—

"The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way,
The first of his works of old.
I was set up of old from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.

"When He set up the heavens I was there:
When he drew a circle on the face of the deep:
When He made firm the skies above . . . .
When he marked out the foundations of the earth:
Then was I with him as his workman,
And day by day was I full of delights,
Playing before him at all times;
Playing in his habitable earth,
And my delights were with the sons of men."

Wisdom was with God from the beginning, or ever the earth was; she was the first of His works. Also she was present at creation, not as a spectator, but as an artificer; the work of creation was but Wisdom realising herself and taking form; creation is the embodiment of her movements, as with an intoxicating joy she played before God; and there, where her delights were highest and her realisation of herself most perfect, was in the habitable earth, the moral world of the sons of men.

8. *Wisdom as Teacher.*—This very remarkable chapter presents, first, Wisdom as a teacher addressing men. The exquisite picture could have been drawn only by combining many materials together, such as the public teaching of the prophets, the conversational instruction of the wise, the procedure of the law courts in the gates, and the many lessons of social order and life which the thronging thoroughfares presented. These are the things that swell the voice of Wisdom: she is the personification of everything that had a voice to speak to men and impress upon them the principles of divine order in the world. Her voice gathers into itself the many voices continually sounding in men's ears, the voice of public life, of an orderly society, of revelation, or, in a word, of the whole course of things.

This is Wisdom the teacher, and her theme is herself, Wisdom the thing. There is such a thing. Within the sphere of life and the world there is a divine framework upon which all things are built. The principles of the economy of the human race and the world in which it is placed form a well-ordered organism, immaterial but not hidden; it speaks with a thousand tongues of revelation and of life, and what it speaks of in the ears of men is itself.

Finally, this organic frame of principles, now realised in the economy of man, had its origin in God; it was from the beginning. God gave it being as the first of His works. It was His creation-plan, His world-conception, which He projected out of

His own mind. Hence it is idealised as having subsistence of its own beside God, and His purpose to realise it is considered a capacity of its own to effectuate itself, which it does in creation. It is God's artificer in creation; it plays before Him, and its play is creation. Every movement embodies itself in some creative work. And there, where the divine beauty of its movements was most conspicuous and its delights deepest, was in the habitable earth and the moral economy of the sons of men. Though the Wisdom here be as yet only a personification and not a person, there is no doubt that the profound conception was taken up among the other Messianic thoughts of Israel, to which it gave vaster scope, suggesting the relation of the Messiah to creation and the universe; and the things said here of Wisdom are seen verified in the Son of God: "The Word was with God;" "All things were made by Him;" and "He is before all things, and in Him do all things subsist."

9. *The Age of the Different Collections.*—The Proverbs are chiefly maxims touching life on its religious and moral side. These maxims, being of such infinite variety, and the fruit of such a wide observation and reflection, cannot be the production of an individual mind. Many of them may well be by Solomon, and a great number may belong to his age; but though the stream of wisdom began to flow in his day, it gathered volume as time advanced. In the book which now exists we find gathered together the most precious fruits of the Wisdom in Israel during many centuries, and no doubt the later centuries were richer, or at least fuller, in their contributions than the earlier.

There is no reason to doubt the historical worth of the headings to chaps. xxv., xxix., "Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah copied out." We have here a historical guarantee that this collection was made in the eighth century, and possibly it may be the oldest of the codes now contained in the book. Many of the proverbs in this case contain a comparison; and as the word "proverb" signifies "comparison," this was probably the oldest form. Some of these comparisons are of great beauty: "An earthen vessel glazed with silver dross; so are fervent lips and a bad heart" (xxvi. 23); "A city that is broken down and without walls, so is he that hath no rule over his own spirit" (xxv. 28); "A trampled fountain and a fouled spring, is a righteous man who giveth way before the evil" (xxv. 26).

Almost all the proverbs that have entered into our own language have been taken from this collection, such as "Iron sharpeneth iron;" "As face answereth to face;" "The dog is returned to his vomit;" "Bray a fool in a mortar;" phrases

like "Heap coals of fire on his head," "Singing songs to a weary heart," "The curse causeless," "The fear of man bringeth a snare," "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back," and many more.

As to the code (chaps. i.—ix.), though the general preface (1—7) has "Proverbs of Solomon," the recurrence of this heading at chap. x. implies that chaps. i.—ix. were not considered Solomonic. These chapters form a general introduction to the Proverbs properly so-called. The descriptions given of Wisdom taking her stand by the broadways and at the gates, and there addressing the crowds of men (chaps. i., viii.), as well as the figure of the "strange woman" prowling in the streets at nightfall (chap. vii.), suggest that the writer had the idea of a large and populous city present to his mind. This city could be no other than Jerusalem, and Jerusalem before its destruction. The miserable city of the Restoration could not, until many generations after the return from exile, have afforded materials for the writer's picture, for in Nehemiah's days, nearly a century after the return of the first exiles, great part of the city was still in ruins (Neh. vii. 4). Probably, therefore, these chapters were written some time before the destruction of the city (586), and about a century after Hezekiah made his collection.

The age of the code, chaps. x.—xxii., is difficult to determine. It has been usually considered the oldest, but the arguments used in support of this view are very precarious. The extremely miscellaneous nature of the collection, the repetitions in it, and the frequent occurrence of proverbs which are but modifications of others, are proofs that it contained elements belonging to very different periods. When we find one proverb repeated verbally (xiv. 12 = xvi. 25), a number of others having the first member identical but differing in the second, and conversely a number having the second member identical but differing in the first, we are led to infer that many of the proverbs, before coming into the collection, had a long history of oral transmission, during which they underwent great changes; that, like defaced coins, they were thrown into the mint and came forth with a new image and superscription to circulate again among men; and that the collection as a whole has been drawn largely from oral sources. While many of the maxims in such a code may be very ancient, the code itself as a collection may be pretty late. There is nothing in the contents which would compel us to bring it in its present form below the Exile; at the same time it is possible that this great collection may have been open to receive later additions. There is little in the other collections to suggest any precise date, although some of the smaller pieces, particularly the closing alphabetical poem, may be late.

ECCLESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER.

1. *Plan and Aim of the Book.*—The title of this book in Hebrew is Kohéleth, a word of somewhat uncertain meaning. Literally it would mean, "one who calls together an assembly;" but, as the assembly of the people was called together to be addressed, the term may mean "the addresser" or teacher, or as we say, the preacher. In this sense the Greek translator took it, rendering "Ecclesiastes," he who addresses the ecclesia—assembly or congregation of the people.

The book has many peculiarities, but several things are suggested by a mere reading of the work. First, the book has a general idea running through it. It is no collection of unconnected fragments, nor mere reflections which the author has transferred from a note-book, or which some one has found in a note-book and given out after the author's death. In some parts of the book the connection may appear loose, but that the author had a general idea in his mind, towards the illustration of which all his examples and musings converge, is in no way to be questioned.

Another thing plain from the book is that the author's aim was practical, and not exclusively speculative. He is a teacher. This is common to him with all Hebrew authors. He has his countrymen before him, and he means to convey a lesson to them to guide them in life in the age and circumstances in which he and they lived. This is evident both from the name which he gives himself and from the concluding references to himself (xii. 9, 10). No doubt he touches on various mysteries, matters which have been subjects of speculation at all times, but he does not pursue these matters out of a speculative interest in them merely, but rather to discover and to teach how human life should be lived in the face of them. It is also true that there is a large personal element in the book: it is the author's confessions; but

he is not solitary in his perplexities, he only gives expression to what many felt. His peculiar state of mind is the product of two general causes, the wretched conditions under which human life was led in his day, and a general religious tone of mind. And both these things must have been common to him with his contemporaries.

2. *Character of the Author.*—From the practical aim of the book it follows that it is everywhere serious. Its aim is moral. There is no dialectical play or word-fencing in it. Ideas are not set up in order to be overturned, nor theories broached in order to be reduced *ad absurdum*. The author nowhere poses or plays the advocate; he is deeply in earnest throughout. Neither is he, as he has often been called, a sceptic. He is baffled before the great problem of God's providential rule of the world, so baffled that action was paralysed; at least he was driven to a mood of mind to which all activity seemed useless, and a passive and quiet enjoyment of whatever good life offered the only reasonable course; but he never doubts any of the great truths commonly believed among his people. He holds fast his faith in God, and even in His moral rule of the world, though his failure to see the latter operating as he would expect is the cause of his perplexity and weariness. But even this mood of weariness gives way before his practical sense, and he counsels men to throw themselves into the stream of human enterprise, undeterred by the uncertainties that may hang over the result of their efforts (xi. 1—6).

It is possible that his gloom of mind from being an effect became also a cause, and threw its own sombre shade over some beliefs or hopes prevailing or beginning to prevail in Israel. He is not unacquainted, for example, with the idea of an immortality of the spirit of man in the presence of God, but the hope is too uncertain to build upon (iii. 20, 21; comp. ix. 1—6). Yet even this negative attitude could scarcely be called scepticism, for though minds like Job and the Psalmists had occasionally divined such an idea in moments of strong faith, it had not yet risen into a fixed belief. The author's position appears to remain the same throughout the whole book. There is no evidence of a struggle in his mind between faith and doubt, in which faith achieves the victory; much less are the difficulties and apparent contradictions of the book to be explained by the assumption that it contains the utterances of "two voices," one doubting and the other believing.

3. *His Philosophy of Life.*—The author states the general conception of his book in the opening verses: All is vanity; what gain is there to man in all the labour in which he labours under

the sun? In other words, human life is without result. And this general truth in regard to human life is also a truth in regard to all things—all things move in an endless round, and nothing results from the movement. The sun rises and sets, and he again rises and sets. The wind circles from north to south, and it returns upon its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, and the sea is not full; the rivers run into the sea. All things recur, and there is nothing new, no advance made, under the sun. If a thing happens of which it is said, this is new, it is not new; it has been long ago, only the past is forgotten, and so that which is now present will be forgotten in the time to come (i. 1—11).

Then the author narrates how he reached this conclusion, and the practical truth at which he arrived in consequence. First, he set himself to inquire by wisdom into all the works which men do under the sun, and he found that all was vanity and without result, for—

> "That which has been made crooked cannot be straightened,
> And that which is wanting cannot be numbered" (i. 15, vii. 13).

Man finds himself imprisoned in a fixed system, the evils of which he is without power to amend. And the very knowledge of this evil system which the author has gained by his study, or as he says, "by wisdom," is itself of no use and a striving after the wind—

> "For in much wisdom is much grief,
> And he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow" (i. 12—18).

Secondly, having failed to find by study of human activity, any form of life that yielded any gain, the author had recourse to another experiment, he tried pleasure. He denied himself no joy, and revelled in all the pleasures which man can procure for himself (not as a vulgar sensualist, for his wisdom remained with him, ii. 3—9); but the experiment was as fruitless as before—

> "I said of laughter, It is mad;
> And of mirth, What doeth it?" (ii. 2.)

This also was vanity. No doubt when wisdom and folly were compared together there was an advantage of a kind in wisdom; yet the advantage was no permanent one, "for as the fool dieth, so dieth the wise man." There being, therefore, no profit or permanent gain in life, however it be lived, the practical conclusion drawn by the author is this: "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour" (ii. 24).

This is no recommendation of a sensual life: it is a recommendation of a sober enjoyment of life while it lasts, in the fear of God, for this is what God has given to man upon the earth (comp. Jer. xxii. 15). And even this *is* the gift of God. Man has no power over anything else, and even over this he has no power, unless God confer the power of enjoyment upon him (ii. 25, 26). For (chapter iii.) all the events of human life are in the hand of God; man has no power over them more than he has over the wind (viii. 8). There is a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to love, and a time to hate; all is in the hand of God, whether it be love or hatred; man knoweth it not—all is "before them" (ix. 1). "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God hath made it that men should fear before him" (iii. 14). Even the evils of life, the injustice and wickedness, are there by God's determination (though this does not remove the culpability of men, whom God made upright); but they have sought out many inventions (vii. 29). His time will come for judging them, for there is a time for everything; and so far as men are concerned they are intended "to prove them," and to teach them what they are, nothing better than beasts; for one occurrence, even death, happens to men and beasts: "Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?" (iii. 16—21).

This, then, is the author's meaning when he says that all is vanity; not quite that which we mean. It is not that the world is unsatisfying, and that the human soul craves something higher than the world can give. It is that all men's efforts are without result. One can accumulate no gain, can perform nothing that can be called an addition to things. His spirit is larger than his sphere. All is vanity because man is not free, because he is confined by a fixed determination of everything on all sides of him by God. He cannot shape any destiny for himself. The vanity is a universal one, because the spirit of man over against God and his determination of all things is impotent, can effect nothing, change nothing, cannot even comprehend the scheme of which it is a fixed part. All that such a being as man can do is to enjoy what of life is good, for this is that which God has given him in his life of vanity.

4. *Date and Style.*—Although there is much that is personal here, particularly in the deep feeling, and the gloom bordering on dispair, of the writer's mind, there are some general points evident enough, which help to explain his particular state of mind. One point is, the wretched condition of society in his day; and another

is, the general religious tone of his time. The date of the book cannot be accurately fixed. It is allowed on all hands to be very late, almost the latest work in the Canon. The language and style cannot be explained on any other supposition.* Although in the beginning of the book the experiments on life seem to be made by Solomon, this transparent disguise is very soon abandoned. Solomon is but the ideal of one possessing the highest wisdom and having the most unbounded resources at his command; and in the epilogue the Preacher is merely one of the wise (xii. 9). The book may almost with certainty be assumed to be earlier than the great outburst of national spirit and religious hopes in the middle of the second century B.C. On the other hand, it is probably not earlier than towards the end of the fourth century. This period from 350 to 150 may be called the dark age of Jewish history, and some time in the course of it Ecclesiastes was written.

5. *Condition of Society.*—Though the particular circumstances that press with such a crushing weight upon the heart of the Preacher are unknown, the veil which he partially lifts from the condition of the world in his day reveals great miseries under which men groaned: injustice in the judgment seat, rapacity of rulers, neglect and persecution of the righteous, and triumph of the strong. The evils of life were such as to cause men to despair. "Then I turned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive; yea, better than both did I esteem him which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun" (iv. 1 *seq.*; comp. iii. 16, 17; viii. 2; x. 5—7, 16, 17, 20).

These passages give a picture of the time. And against such evils the writer felt himself impotent. He was a member of a subject race. Even his own people were probably disunited in sentiment and aim. Mankind seemed to him a heap of atoms without coherence, with no destiny, like fishes of the sea which are taken in an evil net (ix. 12). A hopeless individualism met him everywhere.

6. *Externalism in Religion.*—But another thing also helped to determine his state of mind. A tendency to externalise in religion was the necessary result of the introduction of the strict legalistic constitution at the return from exile. Men put the

* See the proofs in Delitzsch's Commentary (Clark's translation).

law between them and God; they obeyed the law, not God. Further, the very loftiness of the conception of God now reached was in a certain sense dangerous to religion. God became a transcendent omnipotence, far removed from human life. The Preacher never uses the name Jehovah, the living God of the people, but always the abstract "God." Many things show this tendency to remove God away from men's life; for example, the great development of the doctrine of angels, who acted as intermediaries between God and men.

The Preacher's doctrine of predestination is another instance of the same thing. Instead of the living God who of old was present in every movement of the people's history, there is a cold impersonal "purpose" of a distant mind everywhere fulfilling itself. The Preacher is a religious man, a reverent man; the fear of God is strong in his mind, but his religion is reflective merely. He has not that intense feeling of being in fellowship with a living person which Job and the Psalmists had, and which enabled them to force their way through the anomalies of providence to the living God behind it, or to open up as a religious necessity a world beyond death. Job appeals from God to God, from the God whom he identified with providence to the God with whom his spirit had fellowship; but the Preacher knows only the former God, Him whom he learns to know by reflecting on the world and the life of men.

7. *Viewed in the Light of Greek Philosophy.*—Nothing could be more inept than to look upon Ecclesiastes as reflecting the ideas of Greek philosophy, whether Stoical or Epicurean. The coincidences of phraseology are merely literary, not technical. Nor can the terms Stoic or Epicurean be applied to him in their proper sense. One who in answer to the question, What is good for man in his life? says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; . . . sorrow is better than laughter" (vii. 1—6), was at least no vulgar sensualist. Neither is there a trace of Stoicism in the book. On the contrary, it teaches that he who is wise will use every effort to obviate and alleviate the evils of life.

The work is a genuine product of the Hebrew Wisdom. Its fundamental principle is the same as that in the Proverbs and in Job, viz., that God is in all things that occur. But when this principle in a time of prosperity and well-being gave unspeakable joy to the pious mind, and while even in times of adversity and oppression, such as those in which Job and the Psalmist lived, a powerful personal faith was able to use it to wring out great religious principles from it, when the times were evil and faith also feeble, the principle that God determined

everything produced a sense of impotency in the mind which compelled men to conclude that human life was without result. The Preacher's conception of God is too much that of reflection for him to say either with the Psalmist, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee" (Psalm lxxiii. 23), or with Job, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that I shall see God" (xix. 25); but he holds fast to faith in God, in His moral rule, however obscurely it is to be seen, and in human duty. Job and the Psalmists threw themselves upon the anomalies of providence with a religious energy that was determined to get rid of them. The Preacher knows that they are not to be got rid of. Hence the greater part of his book consists of considerations which tend to show either that the evils have some element of good in them, or how to obviate them.

In one respect he makes an advance on older models by drawing the evils of life into life itself, and showing how they have a disciplinary character. Thus even the gross injustice of rulers has the effect of "proving" men (iii. 16); and even a bad government is better than anarchy (v. 8). And on the other side, the things that seem good to men, such as riches, have evils attending them that overbalance the good (vi. 10—17). In general the Preacher recommends a certain prudence and moderation of mind, a wise circumspectness of conduct in all departments of life. Even in religion a man ought to be calm and meditative (v. 1—7). So in regard to evil rulers a wise man will not hastily take part in conspiracies, but wait the judgment of God upon their injustice (viii. 1—7). And in regard to present evils it is foolish to be sentimental over them, and ask why the former days were better than these (vii. 10). The good that there is in the present is to be enjoyed in the fear of God (iii. 14; v. 6; vii. 18), for God will judge every human life (ix. 1—10); and rising above his own philosophy, the Preacher inculcates diligence and a prudent enterprise, without gloomy forecasts in regard to success or failure (xi. 1—6; ix. 10).

8. *The Preacher and His Age.*—No book of Scripture can be justly estimated apart from the age to which it belongs. Every part of Scripture is practical, speaking to the condition of men's minds at the time when it was written. The Preacher belonged to Israel's dark age. The reflecting religion of his day differed from the intuitional fervid religion of the prophets, as much as the colourless piety of the eighteenth century did from the faith of the Reformation, which immediately embraced God. But the apologetics of the eighteenth century were suitable to the time. And the Preacher, when rightly understood,

is seen to furnish a powerful apologetic for his time. His deep sympathy with men in their sorrows, and the undertone of melancholy in his mind, enables him to speak with effect. He has gauged the evil fully. Then in spite of the evil his faith in God and His moral rule, and in human duty, remains unshaken (iii. 17; viii. 12 *seq.*; xi. 9). And the wise practical counsel which he offers, his kaleidoscopic handling of the elements of human life, showing the good side of what is usually thought evil, and the evil side of what is considered good—all this was fitted to give a firmer tone to men's minds.

9. The Preacher rejects the idea of what we call "culture," a disciplining of the individual mind by reflection and the experiences of life. A culture to which death put an end could not satisfy a spirit like his. Then he was too sick at heart to cherish the conception of a progress of the race, a widening of its life in the circuit of the suns. Society was too disintegrated, and the first principle of moral order too habitually disregarded for such an idea to sustain itself. Again he was not certain of a conscious immortality of the individual. And he was still entangled in the belief, which was the cross of all afflicted men in Israel, that the outward lot of men in the world was a true reflection of the mind of God towards them. The Preacher prepares for Christianity by showing the need of it. He is a voice "crying in the night." His cry may justly be called prophetic. The light and immortality brought to light in the Gospel would have changed his "vanity of vanities" into an activity of gladness. When Christ said, "God is spirit, and they that worship must worship Him in spirit," He not only stated a necessity, He gave a definition. Religion is fellowship with God in spirit. And to one having this fellowship the world no more appears, as it did to the Preacher, an external machine, crushing him to pieces; he feels himself with God at the centre of it, and can say to his soul, All things are yours.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

1. *Characteristics.*—The Song remains the most obscure book in Scripture. It is impossible not to feel the charm of its poetry and be delighted by its intense love of nature, a feeling which the poetry of the Hebrews alone among ancient nations exhibits in common with modern poetry. The wealth and luxuriousness of language at the command of the writer in describing the aspects and objects of nature is astonishing, as well as the depth of his feeling for its beauties. It is also easy to perceive from the continuous dialogue carried on in the book that it is of the nature of a lyrical drama, although it may never have been intended, as some writers think that it was, to be actually represented. And finally, it can be perceived at once that the subject celebrated in the book is love (chapter viii. 5—7). But beyond this it is difficult to go with any certainty.

2. *Methods of Interpretation; the Allegorical.*—The earliest known method of interpreting the book was the Allegorical. The love of Solomon and the Shulamite set forth in a figure the love of Jehovah to His people Israel. Traces of this method of interpretation among the Palestinian Jews are found in the Fourth Book of Ezra, about the end of the first century A.D. And the method is fully developed in the Chaldee translation (in the case of this book rather a paraphrase), which, though not itself early, may be presumed to have preserved the early tradition. The book was interpreted by reading into it the whole history of the people of Israel from the Exodus to the perfect times of the Messiah. From the Jews this method passed over to the early Christian Church, naturally with the difference that the book became an allegory of the love between Christ and the Church or the individual soul.

The great theologians of the early and mediæval Church commented on the book in this sense with a voluminousness perhaps not surprising considering that they read into it their own mysticism. Origen's work on the Song extended to ten volumes;

and Bernard in eighty-six sermons had only reached chapter iii. 1, when he was arrested by death. And the same view has been presented with great religious depth and beauty in modern times, sometimes to illustrate the pious soul's experiences, and sometimes as a prophetic prefigurement of the life of Christ or the history of the Church.

Apart, however, from the not very great suitableness of making Solomon represent Christ, the theory fails to take any account of the realistic nature of the book, and leaves very much unexplained. The "little sister" might be heathenism, but who are the sixty queens and eighty concubines? (vi. 8.) And the book itself offers not the slightest hint that it is prophetical. A somewhat different turn has been given by some to the allegory by the assumption that the Shulamite represented "wisdom," and that the love between her and Solomon set forth the wise monarch's devotion to sacred philosophy.

3. *The Typical Method.*—As early as the fifth century Theodore of Mopsuestia, the great Syrian exegete, protested against the allegorical interpretation, though the protest was so little to the taste of the Church of his day that it brought him after his death under ecclesiastical censure. From the seventeenth century, however, there began to prevail a view of the book which might be called the Typical. In the allegorical method Solomon and the Shulamite were mere figures representing higher subjects; the Typical interpretation recognised that there was a real relation of love between the historical king and the Shulamite, also an actual person, but considered that this love was a type of a spiritual relation, according to the Apostle's words regarding marriage, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. v. 32). The Shulamite was supposed by some to be Pharaoh's daughter, the wife of Solomon (Grotius); by other more modern writers a Galilean maiden whom he made his queen (Delitzsch). This theory distinguished between a primary historical sense and a higher typical spiritual sense. A true chaste human love was celebrated in the book, though with the design of suggesting a relation of love which was divine. It was natural when this footing in a historical sense of the book had been gained to drop the supposed typical reference more and more out of view, and to prosecute a closer inquiry into the primary meaning.

4. *Exegetical Difficulties.*—The interpretations hitherto alluded to had assumed that the words of endearment in the book were all spoken by Solomon and the Shulamite in regard to one another. But this view encounters great difficulties. It requires us to suppose that the king is introduced in the guise of a shep-

herd or at least a rustic youth, which is extremely unnatural, besides being inconsistent with other passages where he is called king and represented as surrounded by a royal retinue. It therefore becomes of consequence to inquire who the interlocutors are in the poem.

Of these there are certainly three, Solomon, the Shulamite, and the daughters of Jerusalem, presumably the ladies of the court. In chapter iii. 6 other persons are introduced expressing their admiration of the royal palanquin and retinue seen advancing in the distance, but they are mere spectators and play no part in the piece. In chapter vi. 10 the queens and concubines who exclaim, "Who is this that looks forth like the dawn?" are probably to be identified with the "daughters of Jerusalem." In chapter viii. 8 the Shulamite's brothers are represented as speaking of their sister, but their words are merely recorded by her. She refers to these brothers more than once, and also to her mother; but none of them actually appears upon the scene. It is a question, however, whether there be not a fourth person who is frequently alluded to by the Shulamite, and who on several occasions actually speaks. The Shulamite is supposed to allude to this absent person in the very first words of the poem, verses 1—4, drawing a distinction between him and the king (verse 4). She has been brought into the king's court, the royal ladies are present, verses 5—8, but the king does not appear till verse 9. He addresses her in terms of admiration, verses 9—11, but she indirectly repels his advances by saying, "While the king was (absent) in his divan my spikenard sent forth the smell thereof," that is, the thought of her absent beloved, whom she compares to a bunch of henna flowers, filled her mind with delight. It is to this person that she refers, ii. 8, describing him as "coming skipping upon the hills"—an odd description of a king—and between whom and her the dialogue is carried on, ii. 10—17. It is in regard to this person that the daughters of Jerusalem say to her, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" (v. 9, vi. 3)—a question which they could hardly have put in regard to King Solomon.

5. *Views of Modern Writers.*—Following the clue supplied by these and other passages, modern writers have come to the conclusion that the "beloved" of the Shulamite is not Solomon, but a youth who had won her affections before she accidentally encountered the royal chariot and engaged the attention of the king (vi. 10—13). This view gives an entirely different aspect to the poem. With whatever modifications it then becomes the celebration of a pure affection, which holds out against the temptations of a court, and rises superior to all the seductive arts

even of a monarch. To narrate such a history cannot have been the author's design merely with the view of giving pleasure; his purpose must have been moral; and this moral purpose can hardly have been any other than to protest against the licentiousness of Solomon's court, and to lead men back to simplicity and purity and the law of nature in the relations of men and women.

As such a work could scarcely have come from the hand of Solomon himself, nor from the hand of a subject during his day, and as its language and allusions appear to betray a northern origin, some political motive may have concurred with the primary moral one. This motive could only be to make the royal house of Judah and its rule odious, with the view of strengthening the basis of the newly-formed state in the north. When we remember that the northern kingdom had in some sense the sanction of the prophets of God, such a political motive could hardly be held to detract from the dignity of the poem.

At all events, the question whether the "beloved" of the Shulamite be another than Solomon is one for investigation to settle. No objection could be urged against the poem if its design was to teach the moral lesson just referred to. Men are always, by their luxury and selfishness, found perverting the simplicity of nature; and that which Christ thought it needful strongly to insist upon and make an imperative law of his kingdom, cannot be held beneath the dignity or outside the purpose of the Old Testament to teach. It has always been felt difficult to reconcile the laxity of morals with the elevation of the religion of the Old Testament saints, and it would not be without satisfaction that we found the great fundamental law of nature, now drawn up into Christianity, already insisted upon in this book.

6. *Date and Authorship.*—It must be acknowledged that among those who hold the theory of the book just stated there exists great diversity of opinion as to the interpretation of individual passages. The theory almost of necessity excludes the Solomonic authorship; the book would be about Solomon, not by him. The language of the poem and its allusions are considered to be rather in favour of a northern than a Judean origin. The reference to Tirzah along with Jerusalem (vi. 4) has been thought to point to the time when the former city was the capital of the northern kingdom (1 Kings xiv. 17; xvi. 8, 15) before Samaria was built by Omri (1 Kings xvi. 24; *i.e.* before 920 B.C., but after the disruption of the kingdom under Rehoboam). On the other hand, some of the peculiarities of language are just those which characterised the post-Exile period; and there are some expressions, *e.g.* Pardes (Paradise), which are Persian, and their

occurrence at so early a period awakens doubt. Altogether it must be acknowledged that much obscurity still continues to hang over both the date and the interpretation of the book.

In the Revised Version the spaces left between the verses indicate the different speakers.

A few notes will suggest how the poem is read on the modern view:—

Chapter i. 2—ii. 7: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem, king. (Shulamite, 2—4, speaks of the beloved, who is absent; 9—11, the king addresses her; 12—14, she indirectly repels him. If 15—ii. 3 be a dialogue between her and the king, he must be understood to speak *to* her, while she speaks *of* the beloved, who is absent.)

Chapter ii. 8—iii. 5: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem. (8—14, Shulamite narrates a visit of the beloved and his words, and her own reply, 15—17. The words, 15, are supposed to be a verse of a vineyard song; iii. 1—5, Shulamite narrates a dream or an occurrence.)

Chapter iii. 6—iv. 6: Spectators, king, Shulamite. (6—11, spectators of the approaching litter of the king; iv. 1—6, the king addresses the Shulamite.)

Chapter iv. 7—v. 1: Beloved, Shulamite. (7—16, beloved; last words of 16, Shulamite: v. 1. beloved.)

Chapter v. 2—vi. 3: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem. (2—8, Shulamite narrates a dream; 9, daughters of Jerusalem; 10—16; Shulamite. vi. 1, daughters of Jerusalem; 2, 3, Shulamite.)

Chapter vi. 4—vii. 9: King, daughters of Jerusalem, Shulamite. 4—9, king, 10—13, give an account of the first encounter of the Shulamite with the royal cortège: vii. 1—9, king.)

Chapter vii. 10—viii. 14: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem, beloved. (10—viii. 4, Shulamite; *5a*, a spectator witnessing approach of Shulamite and beloved; *5b*—7, Shulamite to beloved; 8—12, Shulamite narrates an episode of her girlhood, with reflections; 13, beloved to Shulamite; 14, Shulamite in reply.)

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

1. *The Prophet Himself.*—To write anything like a biography of Isaiah is simply impossible. We have no materials for such a work. Like so many other of the great ones who, in the Old Testament story, worked so well for their Master, Isaiah, as regards himself, was usually studiedly silent.

From notices scattered here and there in his writings we gather, however, the following particulars respecting himself. He was the son of Amoz. A Jewish tradition relates how this Amoz was a brother of King Amaziah. This is improbable, as such a relationship would make Isaiah too old. But that in some way Amoz was connected with Amaziah is not unlikely. It is clear that Isaiah belonged to an influential house, from the fact that from early days he was admitted to the friendship of, and evidently had great influence with, Kings Jotham and Hezekiah. It has been suggested by Dean Plumptre that Isaiah was a priest, as the vision which he saw (chap. vi. 1) was from the court which none might enter save the sons of Aaron. The explanation, however, of this scene is, that Isaiah saw and heard what is related in chapter vi. when in a trance.

His life was a long and busy one. He lived and worked under five kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh—apparently under circumstances of great intimacy, roughly speaking from B.C. 779 to B.C. 690, some ninety years. The rabbinical tradition tells us how, under the last-named monarch, having refused to obey some of his idolatrous ordinances, the aged prophet was cruelly put to death : *placed*, so runs the story, *between two planks, Isaiah was killed by being sawn asunder.* The reference in Heb. xi. 37 is not improbably an allusion to the great prophet's fate. Compare Talmud, treatise Sanhedrim, ciii. 2. The Fathers Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Jerome, and Augustine accept this tradition as authentic.

It was a stormy and eventful period during which Isaiah

lived and preached and wrote. In his earlier years he dwelt in the midst of the comparative wealth and luxury enjoyed by Judah during the prosperous reign of Uzziah. He witnessed the sister kingdom of Israel first rendered tributary by the Assyrian monarch Pul, and subsequently conquered by the same people under Tiglath-Pileser. He watched the last struggles of Israel and the desperate resistance of Samaria, when the remnant of the ill-fated northern division of the chosen people were carried into captivity.

Isaiah, we know, with his own immediate circle, belonged to the higher and wealthier classes. He was on terms of intimacy with the high priest, and his usual residence was in the capital. As time went on, his influence increased, and in middle and later life he was undoubtedly the foremost man in the nation, exercising a peculiar power over the sovereign of the time and his advisers. His mighty and enduring influence was due, in the first instance, to his great natural abilities, to his earnestness and singleness of purpose, to his true patriotism and passionate desire to see his countrymen once more restored to the favour of the invisible King to whom the nation owed name, and laws, and political existence. But behind these things which any great and patriotic statesman might have possessed, Isaiah was indubitably regarded by king and people as possessing, in an eminent degree, those rare and supernatural powers which, ever and anon, belonged to the great religious heroes of Hebrew story, men like Samuel, Nathan, and Elijah. After David, Isaiah is possibly the most conspicuous personage in the history of Israel.

When Isaiah lived there was little left in Israel or Judah of real religious life. There was the formal, elaborate ritual of service and of sacrifice still maintained in the Temple, but it was generally hollow and meaningless, and the old friendship between the individual Israelite and the Eternal of Hosts comparatively unknown. In the northern kingdom of Israel, the cup of iniquity was filled, as we have seen, in Isaiah's time, and the prophet-statesman was a witness of the final invasion, the utter defeat of its armies, the storming of the capital city, Samaria, and the hopeless captivity of the people.

In the southern kingdom of Judah, it was Isaiah's life work to bring about a reformation, and to ward off a ruin similar to that which was witnessed in their kinsmen of the northern kingdom. The internal order of Judah, in the days when Isaiah wrote, has been graphically described as follows: * "Wealth

* See Professor Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, lecture vi., "The Reign of Ahaz."

had greatly accumulated in the later years of comparative prosperity, but its distribution had been such that it weakened rather than added strength to the nation. The rich nobles were steeped in gallantry, and feminine extravagance and vanity gave the tone to aristocratic society, which, like the *noblesse* of France on the eve of the great Revolution, was absorbed in gaiety and pleasure, while the masses were ground down by oppression, and the cry of their distress filled the land. All social bonds were loosed in the universal reign of injustice; every man was for himself, and no man for his brother. The subordination of classes was undermined. . . . The characteristic Hebrew obstinacy . . . was backed up by false religious confidence. The idols, of which the land was full, had not lost their reputation. Isaiah alone foresaw the approach of the hour of despair, when their vain deliverers should be confronted with stern realities."

During the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz his work and preaching outwardly seemed to have effected but little. But, no doubt round the loved prophet an ever-increasing circle of disciples, and listeners were preparing the way for the great reformation which took place in the reign of King Hezekiah. Under this monarch Isaiah's influence reached its highest point. At the court he was all-powerful; among all classes of the people his popularity was evidently very great. Nor was his advice and counsel by any means limited to the moral life of the nation and to things religious. He was, too, throughout the reign, the trusted adviser in foreign affairs and so could dictate the bold and patriotic policy which ended in the crushing defeat and consequent retreat of Sennacherib and the powerful Assyrian host. Of this particular period of Isaiah's life we have a detailed account, evidently from the pen of the prophet himself.

In the course of his story this true servant of the Lord lifts the veil which hangs between us and the unseen world around us, and gives us a graphic picture of the direct interposition of the Eternal of Hosts in favour of repentant Israel at the supreme moment of her awful danger.

During the remainder of Hezekiah's reign Judah enjoyed comparative peace and prosperity. It is in this period of rest, when the people, struggling to cleanse and purify the national life, were restored to the protection of the Glorious Arm, that Isaiah, released from the burden of sorrowful denunciation of national corruption, and rejoicing in the newly found national prosperity under the shadow of the Almighty Wings, saw and wrote down the exquisite and touching prophecies and promises which form the last great division of his works.

Tradition—apparently reliable—tells us how the old prophet

lived to see Manasseh succeed Hezekiah; lived to mourn over the utter declension of Judah, which set in during Manasseh's reign, and at last perished in his efforts to stem the tide of idolatry.

2. *The Work of Isaiah.*—The exact position Isaiah held in Jerusalem or at the court of the king of Judah is difficult for us to define. From either his relationship to the royal house, or from his position in Judah, he evidently was during the greater portion of his life on intimate relations with the court, and at times his influence appears to have been very great. He occupied with the people the peculiar position of a prophet or leader with whom the Eternal of Hosts held frequent communings. He was regarded with the same feelings of awe, mingled with fear or love, as in old days an Elijah or Elisha had been. To this favoured friend of the Eternal would the High and Holy One now and again, by vision in a prolonged trance, or by some mysterious communication of the Word of the Lord, disclose His will, and impart such knowledge of the near or even distant future as would assist his prophet in his high and difficult work.

Now what was this work? It was to bring to Judah—still loved of God—final offers of mercy; it was to tell them the sure doom which would follow if the present way of living was still followed in Judah and Jerusalem. It was to point out the utter worthlessness of the elaborate ceremonial law and the stately Temple ritual if *the life* of the nation remained selfish and loveless.

This arousing message, delivered in the morning of Isaiah's life, had but little success. The evil things went on in Judah as they did aforetime. The prophet was then charged with a stern message of doom. The reign of Hezekiah, and the reformation in the religion and life of the people, was the result. A new day seemed to be dawning for the chosen race. King and people united in a brave effort to reform the former life. Nor did the reward tarry, for the glorious Arm of the Lord was raised conspicuously in defence of Jerusalem and her king on the occasion of the great catastrophe which destroyed the army of Sennacherib.

The record of these stirring events was written by Isaiah himself, and the scribe who in after days collected and compiled his writings wove the well-loved record of the bright times when Hezekiah was king into the tapestry of his prophecy.

In those happy days after the great deliverance from Sennacherib, we think the word of the Lord came with new power on the prophet, perhaps somewhat after the fashion so beautifully

suggested by Dean Bradley*: "Isaiah was transported by God's Spirit into a time and region other than his own; . . . he is led in prolonged and solitary visions into a land that he has never trodden, and to a generation on whom he has never looked.

"The familiar scenes and faces among which he had lived and laboured have grown dim and disappeared. All sounds and voices of the present are hushed, and the interests and passions into which he has thrown himself, with all the intensity of his race and character, move him no more. The present has died out of the horizon of his soul's vision. . . . The voices in his ears are those of men unborn, and he lives a second life among events and persons, sins and sufferings, fears and hopes, photographed with the minutest accuracy on the sensitive and sympathetic medium of his own spirit; and he becomes the spokesman of the faith, and hope, and passionate yearning of the exiled nation, the descendants of men living when he wrote, in the profound peace of a renewed prosperity."

Very roughly, then, the writings of Isaiah may be divided into three great divisions—

The First. The book of warnings, denunciation, and woe.

The Second. The historical episode of the conversion of Israel under Hezekiah, and how the Lord awaked as one out of sleep and raised once more the Glorious Arm in defence of the people whom he loved.

The Third. The book of consolation, written during the happier days of Hezekiah—the outcome of what he saw in vision and trance concerning the coming Redeemer and the future of the Israel of God.

3. *The Authorship of Chapters xl.—lxvi.*—The authorship of the last great section of "Isaiah," chapters xl.—lxvi., in recent times has been frequently called in question. In Old Testament criticism these famous chapters occupy in some respects a somewhat similar position to St. John's Gospel in the New Testament, both suggesting searching inquiry, owing to the deep importance of both these writings in Christian theology.

The question is, Did Isaiah write these chapters? After

* The passage occurs in a University sermon, and was published in the *Undergraduates' Journal* (Oxford), Feb. 18, 1875, and is quoted by Professor Cheyne in these words ("Isaiah," vol. ii., essay 6): "No one, perhaps, has better expressed this view than the present Dean of Westminster, who does not, however, venture to decide upon its merits." The view in question was that Isaiah xl.—lxvi. was a monograph written by Isaiah in a quasi-ecstatic state, not necessarily at one time. St. John not improbably refers to some such quasi-ecstatic condition when he writes, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice," &c., &c. (Rev. i. 10).

weighing the various arguments it seems indisputably clear that he and no other was the writer.

The following is a summary of the main points of the evidence which leads us to this conclusion.

(i.) *The Clear Testimony of History.*—It may be asserted with all confidence that for eighteen centuries no Jewish tradition existed which even suggested a different author of this latter part of the "Isaiah" prophecy; on the contrary, all ancient authority from the earliest times contradicts any suspicion of the authorship of chapters xl.—lxvi. So the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament scriptures, put out B.C. 285—150, ascribes the *entire* contents of the book to Isaiah, son of Amoz. While in the book of Psalms—then as now popularly ascribed to David—the LXX. translators are careful in their headings to particular psalms, to give the name of the traditional composer of the special psalm—such as Moses, Asaph, Ethan, "the chief musician," and others.

Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of the book "Ecclesiasticus," distinctly ascribes to the Isaiah "who lived in the days of Hezekiah" the authorship of chapters xl.—lxvi. of the great prophecy. This son of Sirach was famous in his days for great learning and wisdom. He lived and wrote his important work *circ.* B.C. 150.

About 170 B.C. the Haftarahs, or prophetic lessons read in the synagogue on Sabbath days, festivals, and fasts, were authoritatively arranged by the Jews. Sixteen of these lessons are taken from Isaiah; of these thirteen are taken from these disputed chapters.

Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian, very early in the Christian era gives it as a received tradition among his countrymen that Cyrus published his decree for the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra i. 2) after he had been shown Isaiah's prophecies about himself (Isaiah xliv. 28 and following).

Among the early Christians no doubt as to the authorship of these chapters existed. The New Testament writers constantly quote them as Isaiah's. The first suggestion that the writings contained in chapters xl.—lxvi. were not the work of Isaiah came from the Jewish writer Aben Ezra, who wrote in the twelfth century of our era—nearly two thousand years after the first appearance of the great prophecies. During those two thousand years these writings had been read and studied and pondered over by Jew and Gentile, by friend and foe, with varied feelings, but with the deepest interest and closest attention. But no idea of another than Isaiah having been their author seems ever to have occurred to either friend or foe.

From Aben Ezra's time until the close of the eighteenth century—five to six hundred years more—nothing fresh was suggested respecting the authorship of these later chapters of Isaiah. Since the close of the last century the last part of Isaiah has occupied the place, in some respects—with scholars and critics of different schools of thought—in the Old Testament, which the Gospel of St. John fills in the New.

There is no doubt but that in both these cases it is the very clear and definite witness to the Person and office of Jesus Christ which these writings afford, which has brought upon them this searching and often hostile investigation.

It has been well said that "the fact that such a character as Jesus Christ, so unique, so divine, should have come into the world, leads us to feel that there must surely have been in earlier times some shadows at least, or images, to represent, dimly it may be, to former generations that great thing which they were not actually to witness. It would lead us to believe that there must have been some prophetic voice to announce the future coming of the Lord, or else the very stones would have cried out."* Such a reasonable expectation is fulfilled in many a passage whispered at different times by the Holy Spirit into the ears of prophet and psalmist, and woven by them—bright golden threads—into the tapestry of their writings. Nowhere, however, in any of the Old Testament writings do we find such distinct pictures of Jesus Christ, the suffering Messiah, as in the so-called second part of Isaiah—such clear foreshadowings of special circumstances in the life of our Lord. The earlier chapters of the same prophet are not without these foreshadowings; for instance, in the seventh chapter we have the strange and, until the Incarnation, the inexplicable picture of the Virgin who was to conceive and to bear a Son whose name was to be "Immanuel" (God with us); and in the ninth chapter we read of the Child who was to be born and given to us, and the Child's name was to be "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The meaning of the marvellous picture of the Divine Child—who was to be called "the Mighty God"—was an unsolved mystery till the birth of the Child Jesus.

But the portraits of the teaching, suffering, and in His suffering triumphant, Messiah, notably in chapters xlii. 1—7, xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, lii. 13—15, liii., stand out alone in vividness, exactness, and clearness among the many Old Testament foreshadowings of the coming Deliverer.

* Dean Stanley, quoted by Professor Cheyne, "Isaiah," vol. ii. p. 194.

No one, save he whose heart is hopelessly hardened and whose eyes are eternally blinded, can read these words, written seven hundred years before the Passion tragedy, without being conscious of something of the impression that this solemn, awful prophecy produced upon the Earl of Rochester, of whom Bishop Burnet writes: "As Lord Rochester heard it read, he felt an inward force upon him which did so enlighten his mind and conviction that he could resist it no longer, for the words had an authority which did shoot like rays or beams in his mind, so that he was convinced, not only by the reasonings he had about it which satisfied his understanding, but by a power which did so effectually constrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in the Saviour as if he had seen him in the clouds."*

But the famous second part of Isaiah does not merely contain these vivid pictures of that strange sweet life which, seven hundred years later, was to be lived in Israel and Judah. It contains plain and unmistakable statements respecting the great doctrine —the keystone of Christian theology—vicarious atonement. In the famous passage, chapter lii. 13—15, and chapter liii., it is plainly taught in language none can mistake. The servant of the Lord successfully makes intercession for the many sinners, and by the sacrifice of Himself atones for their sins. It is true that this is the master-thought which runs through the whole of the Law of Moses, but it was left to Isaiah (in the so-called second part of the book of his prophecy) to explain how this great atonement was to be made and who was the Person to make it.

It was necessary that this all-important explanation should be made in order to explain the latter part of that wonderful Psalm xxii., which, next to these chapters of Isaiah, contains the clearest anticipation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament; for there is a gap between the former and the latter part of this psalm, which can only be filled up by assuming the vicarious atonement given by Isaiah lii. 13—15, liii. "The writer of the psalm foresaw, as it were in a vision, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, but it was not revealed to the Psalmist how these sufferings produced so immense a result."† Isaiah, in certain of the later chapters of his prophecy, fills up this gap, and completes the prophetic story of the future great Redemption, not of Israel, but of all the world.

(ii.) *The Arguments upon which Critics, since the end of the Eighteenth Century, have based the Assumption that Chapters xl.—lxvi. were the work of other hands than Isaiah's.*—These chap-

* Quoted by Professor Cheyne, "Isaiah," vol. ii. p. 208.

† See Professor Cheyne, "Isaiah," vol. ii., essay III (4).

ters would have been written with greater probability by a Jew living at the time of the return from Babylon. The name and history of Cyrus (chapters xliv., xlv.) would have been known to such a writer, whereas, if these prophecies were Isaiah's, a special revelation of the name and work of the great Persian monarch must have been made to the prophet in a trance or otherwise. But such an argument here can have little weight. The whole of the great prophecy known as Isaiah's is undoubtedly studded with such special revelations: for instance, prediction of the fall of Babylon, of the most definite kind in chapter xiii., xiv., xxi. Again, granted that chapters xl.—lxvi. were the work of a Jew or Jews contemporary with the return from Babylon, what but a special revelation had enabled the writer or writers to have written this marvellous detailed story of the passion of Jesus Christ, more than five centuries before this strange, awful drama was acted under the shadow of Herod's temple in the Jerusalem of Pontius Pilate?

If the modern critic gets rid of the difficulty which the prediction of the doom of Babylon, or the restoration by the Persian Cyrus, confronts him with, he is met with the far more important question: Who told the writer the Passion story?

(iii.) *The Local Colouring of the Late Chapters.*—Absolutely nothing can be made of this argument. These notices of scenery can be pressed with equal force by the critics, or by those scholars who prefer to walk along the old paths of Jewish and Gentile tradition.

(iv.) *The Question of Style.*—Considerable stress has been laid by the school of modern critics on the change of the style of the different divisions of the book. They suggest that the Book of Isaiah, in the form we possess it, was the work of four or five, or even more hands (Ewald suggests seven). Now it is clear that the prophet-statesman lived to a great age, and that a very large portion of his long life was passed in activity, now as a preacher of righteousness, now as a prophet or seer in the highest sense of the word, now as a statesman. The book, as we have it, represents his work in all these different epochs of his long and varied career, a public career which was contemporary with the reigns of five kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh—a period of between sixty and seventy years.

The slight differences in the style and diction of this book—for after all the differences are but slight—are exactly what would be expected from a writer writing during a period extending over so many years and addressed to such varied audiences. It is, in fact, what we find in authors of our own age. Then too, the style of a writing devoted to passionate exhortation or

burning rebuke would be considerably altered from the style of a composition devoted to a mysterious prophecy of things to happen in some dim and far-remote future, or made up of words of blessed comfort and serene hope. And it is of these different compositions that the Book of Isaiah is made up. The so-called earlier chapters are mainly made up of passionate exhortation and burning rebuke. The smaller central portion is purely historical, and consists of the archives of a portion of King Hezekiah's noble and eventful reign, picturesquely and graphically written. The latter chapters are for the most part prophecies of a far future, lit up with joyous expectancy, or are words of the sweetest comfort written in language of the sublimest poetry. Surely all these compositions, spread over sixty or seventy years, could not be written in one style; the most skilful forger the world has ever seen could scarcely have accomplished such a task.

Indeed, the differences of style are what a fair critic would naturally expect. On the other hand, in all the various sections of Isaiah we find the same thoughts running through the writings, the same imagery adopted, the same words used, the same metaphors employed. For instance, the loved title of God, "the Holy One of Israel," which we only find in five places in all the other books of the Old Testament, in the earliest chapters of Isaiah we come upon it eleven times, and in the later chapters thirteen times. As an instance of the same peculiar imagery being adopted, the images of light and darkness, used in a spiritual sense, are comparatively rare in the Old Testament; in the Book of Isaiah they are very frequent, light being used some eighteen times, and darkness sixteen, and the imagery occurs indifferently in the various sections of the prophecy.*

Indeed the advocates of a plurality of authors in Isaiah are compelled to allow that the "great unknown" (the appellation given by Ewald to the writer to whom he attributes the largest share in the authority of the so-called disputed chapters), and the other presumed writers of large portions of the book, must have been deeply steeped in the phraseology and thoughts of the older Isaiah to have been able so closely to imitate the famous and popular prophet.

Dean Plumptre has well observed here "that the history of all literature shows that a writer may, from various motives, so imbue his mind with the thoughts and language of another, that it will not be easy even for an expert to distinguish between the

* Canon Rawlinson, in his comments on Isaiah, discusses the points raised here at great length (see "Pulpit Commentary," "Isaiah," pp. xxii.—xxvii.), and gives very many similar examples.

counterfeit and the original. All that can be said as to the application of this inductive method to the disputed portions of Isaiah is that the parallelisms and peculiarities may fairly be left to balance each other." * In this portion of the field the contest will and must ever be a drawn one; the disputants on both sides will claim the victory. The real battle-field must be chosen elsewhere. The advocates for the unity of authority of the book bearing the honoured name of Isaiah may, however, rest their arguments with real security upon the historical proofs already adduced; may ask their adversaries, with some confidence that no satisfactory reply will be given, how it comes to pass that while Jewish tradition faithfully hands down the varied authorship of many of the Psalms, attributed as a whole to David, no hint is given as to a varied authorship of the different sections of Isaiah; but from two hundred and fifty years before Christ † until our own day, with the exception of one solitary scholar in the twelfth century (Aben Ezra), we know that Jews as well as Christians have held and taught, without doubt and without question, that the book of the Old Testament known as Isaiah was written during the lifetime and by the hand of the great prophet-statesman.

4. *Characteristic Features of the "Messiah of Isaiah."*—The Book of Isaiah occupies its unique position in the hearts of all sorts and conditions of men, in the hearts of the many unlearned, as well as of the few learned, owing to its frequent mention of and reference to Messiah, not only the Restorer of the tribes of Israel, but the Light of the Gentiles also. It is not its many and deeply interesting historical allusions, not its curious and plainly fulfilled prophecies, not its words of tenderest comfort, not its sublime and soul-stirring poetry, which has won for it its solitary pre-eminence among the prophetic books, perhaps among all the writings of the Old Testament; it is its testimony to Messiah, to which men's hearts turn, some with unfriendly critical inquiry, some with grateful adoration. It is its strange and marvellous witness to the coming Redeemer which constitutes its chief title to honour.

(i.) Among its characteristic Messianic features is the extraordinary resemblance of the person painted and of the life described to the person and life of Jesus Christ, who did not appear on the visible stage of the earth for some seven hundred years after the writing and teaching of Isaiah. Among other

* The Dean of Wells (Dr. E. H. Plumptre), "Isaiah," in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary on the Old Testament, Introduction, p. 414.

† And the LXX scholars of course simply repeated the teaching they had received from a yet earlier generation.

famous passages which exemplify this, the following are especially notable—Isaiah vii. 14, &c.; the strange and supernatural manner of Messiah's birth—Isaiah ix. 12; the Galilean ministry of Messiah; and chiefest of all, Isaiah lii. 13—15, liii.; the manner in which the work of Messiah was accomplished. Many other sections and passages might be quoted to exemplify this last characteristic feature, notably Isaiah lxi. 1—3.

(ii.) The Messiah or servant of Jehovah in His work of governing and redeeming the world is Himself Divine. This runs through various parts of the prophecy. Especially, however, should be noted Isaiah ix. 6, where the prophet states how the "Child Messiah" was to be styled "The Mighty God," the same lofty and awful title given in the next chapter (x. 21) to Jehovah. Thus in the prized volume of the most revered prophet of the monotheistic Jew is the coming Messiah termed "The Mighty God"!

(iii.) While presenting a picture of a Messiah glorious and triumphant (see such passages as Isaiah lxiii. 1—6), this book paints in plain, unmistakable colours the sad true figure of this Messiah winning His glory and triumph through an awful suffering (as in Isaiah lii. 13—15, liii.). The striking and ample references in Isaiah to a suffering and, through His suffering, triumphant Messiah, supplement and illustrate with a startling clearness older and more obscure references to the same awful suffering to be endured by the coming Divine Deliverer in the Psalms and older prophets. It was no doubt mainly owing to these references, especially to the Isaiah passages, as well as to oral traditions, that the great Jewish teachers, before and after the Christian era, whose teaching is embodied and crystallised in their loved Talmud, owed their doctrine of a suffering Messiah. This doctrine of the Talmudists is well illustrated by the following beautiful apologue taken from the Talmud: "Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi found Elijah, who, in Jewish tradition, was to be the pioneer of the Messiah, standing at the gate of Paradise. Rabbi Joshua asked Elijah, 'When cometh the Messiah?' Elijah replied, 'At the Lord's good pleasure.' Again Rabbi Joshua asked, 'When cometh the Messiah?' Elijah answered, 'Go thyself and ask him.' Rabbi Joshua went on, 'Then where dwelleth he?' Elijah told him, 'Messiah was at the gate of the city (Rome), and was sitting among the poor and sick, and there was tenderly dressing one wound after the other.'"—Talmud, Treatise Sanhedrim, 98a.*

* Quoted by Professor Cheyne, "Isaiah," essay ii. 219, from Wunsche—"Leider des Messias." Leipzig: 1870. See Dr. Westcott, "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," chap. xi.

(iv.) The doctrine of the vicarious atonement (in the sense Christians understand it) is plainly taught by Isaiah. A suffering Messiah was no new idea in Hebrew theology; and the thought of the vicarious atonement which this Divine sufferer was to accomplish, had appeared in even the earlier Books of the Old Testament. Effectual intercession of the righteous for the sinful is a thought running through the entire Old Testament (cf. such passages as Genesis xviii. 23 ff, Exodus xxxii. 32 ff, Psalm cvi. 23, and Amos vii. 1 ff*): and though we know there is a height which guilt may reach at which God will no longer accept the intercession of his servants (Jeremiah xv. 1, xi. 14 ff), the way is prepared for the revelation of One greater than any of the created sons of men; of One not only perfectly righteous Himself, but able by uniting them mystically to Himself to make the many righteous; of One whose sacrifice of Himself was so precious that it could be accepted even for a people which had deliberately broken its covenant with Jehovah, and which was therefore legally liable to the punishment of extirpation.

The thought too was perpetually before the eyes of the children of Israel in their simple sacrifices, from the days of Adam to Moses, and after the time of Moses in the elaborate ritual of the Tabernacle and the Temple. But the thought was embodied by Isaiah in language new and possibly for the hearers, strange and startling.

5. *The Character of Isaiah the Prophet.*—Although we are not in possession of materials which would enable the writer to put together a life of Isaiah, yet from the sixty-six chapters which we possess of his, we can form a fairly accurate knowledge of the character of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, the one who—of all that strong, mighty band who occupy a unique position in the world's story—has most powerfully influenced not merely the generations among whom he lived and worked, but their descendants for some 2,600 eventful years.

The most conspicuous feature of this true hero, and the one which must most weightily influence those souls who, more or less closely, have communed with the book of his prophecy, is his reverence for, his awful fear of, the Lord. It seems as though the vision which he saw when on the threshold of active life was ever present with him, as though he ever looked on the Lord high and lifted up, the seraphim, or burning ones, standing by the awful Presence, keeping solemn watch and ward.

6. *Isaiah in a Vision had looked on God.*—As a preacher and teacher he delivered his message, often a hard stern message, fearlessly.

* Oehler, O. T. Theol. ii. 425 (trans.).

To him, whether he addressed the king or the lowest subject, it was the same thing. He would say to the monarch: "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but must ye weary my God also?" In the most scathing terms he denounces the nobles and chief men of the country for their pride and injustice, for their sensuality, for their heartless oppression of the poor and helpless. Isaiah, in his great and sublime task, cared for no man—prince, or noble, or high official.

Not that he was in any sense a demagogue, thirsting for popular applause. In the plainest, severest language he reproached the people for their want of true religion, for their love of evil. "The faithful city" (Jerusalem), he tells them, "has become a harlot." "The people are laden with iniquity; they are a seed of evil-doers." "The nation is a sinful nation." The people draw near God, with their mouth and with their lips they honour Him, but they have removed their hearts far from Him. Yet in spite of this severity, this hot indignation against sin, we find him ever full of the tenderest sympathy towards sinners.

Although a true Jew and a devoted patriot, his heart is large enough to rejoice at the grand vista which he beheld in his visions of the future admission of the isles of the Gentiles into the glorious kingdom of his God.

As a writer Isaiah was a humorist and satirist in the truest sense of the word. This is evident from his vivid, quaint description of the strange manufacture of idols and images of worship, from his curious and vivid picture of female luxury and fashion in his day and time.

For some sixty years this noble and heroic man, who after David fills the foremost place in the story of the chosen people, discharged the varied offices of prophet and seer, writer and statesman, in a most critical and eventful period of his nation's history. To his devoted loyalty to the God who loved Israel, to his unswerving faith, to his splendid patriotism, was owing the great moral revolution which was rewarded by the golden reign of the great Hezekiah, and the strange spectacle of the comparatively little kingdom of Judah successfully defying the mighty power of the greatest nation of the Eastern world. And although Isaiah survived the good and great Hezekiah, and lived long enough to witness the relapse of the court and people into their old sin and degradation, his writings and his work lived on long after Jerusalem was a byword and her Temple a ruin. Though, to human eyes, Isaiah and his work seemed a failure, and his words as though only traced in the sand, the words and the work, the one dictated and the other inspired

by the Eternal of Hosts, men now see possess a deathless power which increases as the centuries roll on in their solemn course. The words have been—nay, still are—in part, at least, the basis of the theology of Christendom. On them the pious Jew still loves to linger, because they represent to him the noblest, truest aspirations of his race. In them, century after century, devout Christians in every nation under heaven find written in the sublimest yet in the simplest language those sweet and blessed promises which, in all the stress and fever of life's trials, nerve men and women to suffer and be strong, and which again and again whisper to them of the coming times when sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Like so many of earth's great ones, the prophet-statesman—so runs the sad tradition—passed through pain and agony to his rest. Now in the bosom of God he sees the fruit of his long and noble though, as far as earth was concerned, ill-requited toils—sees the souls of unnumbered harassed ones finding in his story of Messiah new and ever new bulwarks for the faith which must save them; reading in his sweet and comfortable promises great and fresh assurances of the perfect peace which passeth understanding. May we not say of Isaiah as of Isaiah's master, "He sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied"?

7. *Of the Compilation of Isaiah in its present Form.*—It is clear that the Book of Isaiah as we possess it—even though it be assumed (as it is in this little study) that it is all the work of one hand, and that the hand of the great prophet—never left the prophet in its present evidently abbreviated, and (looked at as a whole) disconnected state.

Now roughly the Book of Isaiah may be divided into three main parts.

Part i. is largely made up of sections containing burning exhortations to repentance and of scathing denunciations, and consists of thirty-five chapters. These sections are some of them very brief, evidently but extracts from a much longer original. This first part is capable of division into many sections, each of which is perfectly complete in itself, and hardly, if at all, connected with what precedes or succeeds it.

Part ii., chapters xxxvi.—xxxix. is purely an historical memoir of a remarkable episode in the history of Judah, an episode with which Isaiah was closely connected. It is a piece quite complete in itself, and has no real connection with anything that goes before or that follows after.

Part iii. consists of twenty-seven chapters, xl.—lxvi., and may be described as "the Book of Consolations." It is not so entirely disconnected as Part i., still it is broken up into

many different sections. It cannot be looked upon as originally one book.

The whole of the great work has evidently passed through the hands of a compiler, who has chosen for his purpose only certain extracts from the writings of the great author. Yet this collection or compilation is of most ancient date. Isaiah, as we now have it in our English Bible, was read and studied in the synagogues and schools in the time of our Lord, nearly nineteen centuries ago. In more remote times we still find "Isaiah" in its present condition. The Septuagint translation was made about 250 B.C. from the same Hebrew "Isaiah" which we now possess. The revision or compilation must then have been made at some epoch between 750 B.C. and 250 B.C.

The question then presents itself: How, and when, and by whom was this work of collecting and selecting, and possibly of recasting the Prophet's writings, carried out? We possess no details here, no tradition of names remains to us. After the return from the Captivity, when the chosen people were once more settled in their ruined city and loved land, but under sadly changed conditions: shorn of their old power and wealth, reduced in numbers and in influence, scarcely owning a name even among vassal races, in these times of regret and almost hopeless mourning the people cared for the memory of the great heroes who had been friends of God in a way their ancestors had never cared for the living men themselves. It was to satisfy their national cravings to learn more of a past life irrevocably lost, of a life illumined by the nearer presence of a God the memory of whose very NAME was lost, that there arose among the "returned from exile" a great and peculiar literary class—the scribes or Sopherim—whose function was collecting and editing, and probably subsequently expounding, the scattered records of prophetic revelation. Much of the Old Testament as we now possess it was the work of these earnest and devoted men. But though these Sopherim or scribes may, probably did, put the larger part of our Old Testament into its present shape, its devout reader need never think that the old loved words are not the words of Moses or Samuel, or the expressions of David or Isaiah. It is hard to believe that a scribe ever altered a word or changed an expression; he abbreviated and made selections—that was all.

When we call to mind the deep spirit of intense reverence for every letter of their ancient records which, with all their faults, certainly characterised the Jewish nation after the return from the Captivity, when we remember the strange and peculiar respect for every jot and tittle of the sacred memoirs of their

dead heroes which we know was the great feature of the Jews in those sad times of cherished memories and unavailing regrets, it is surely in the highest degree improbable that any additions were made to the records which they possessed. The work of the Sopherim was no doubt limited to a careful selection of what they deemed important and interesting for the people, to what especially bore upon the lost national glories of Israel and their former intimate friendship with the Eternal of Hosts, and, above all, to what threw light upon the dim and distant vision of the coming Deliverer, the one hope which lent colour to this grey and monotonous period.

The work of the Sopherim may be summed up in the word "abbreviation," or better, "selection from" materials preserved in the schools of the prophets or in the royal and priestly archives. There is no reason to suppose that any of these precious writings were lost in the days of their captivity. Such a probable theory of the work of the Sopherim on the books of the Old Testament, after the return from exile, will explain many a difficulty in the various books, as, for instance, repetition, apparent contradiction, want of continuity, seeming error; when it is remembered that constantly the important passage or the interesting statement has been without explanation taken from the context; when it is borne in mind how not unfrequently the same story as told by two or more narrators, viewing the events naturally from entirely different standpoints, has been selected, from its deep importance or its special interest, for a double mention (like the story of Creation in Genesis), in the scribes' great compilation men call the Old Testament.

To sum up, these scribe compilers of Isaiah had before them probably a considerable mass of memoirs, prophecies, sermons, written memoranda of rapt communings with his God-friend, left by Isaiah, the fruit of a life of sixty noble years of toil, and out of all this mass of material, the Sopherim had to select what in their judgment would best help to raise the life of the poor remnant of fallen Israel which had returned to their country. This explains the varied nature of the book, its abruptness, its strange want of continuity; the abruptness, for instance, of the two earliest Messianic prophecies in chapters vii. and ix. These passages were no doubt taken from their original context, a context which probably contained no useful lesson for future days, while the marvellous and startling prophecies by themselves were judged worthy of a place in the book, though the compilers possibly never guessed their deep, real import. Applying this rule generally, many of the difficulties of exposition vanish.

According to their judgment was the selection made. Yes, but was not that judgment helped, informed, prompted, by the unearthly higher wisdom? May we not surely teach that these nameless Sopherim too were, in the highest sense, inspired in their selection of passages. To their loved work they devoted their lives, regardless of personal distinction. To these self-forgetting ones Professor Cheyne, though in a different context, nobly applies the words of an American prose-poet: "They chose the better, and loftier, and more unselfish part, laying their individual hopes, their fame, their prospects of enduring remembrance, at the feet of those great departed ones whom they so loved and venerated." *

8. *On the Sopherim (Scribes), to whose Labour "The Book of Isaiah" in its Present Form is owing.*—Roughly speaking, we may assume that Ezra, the Priestly Scribe, on the return from the Captivity about B.C. 450—440, laid the foundation of the new Judaism. The destruction of the Temple and city, the long Captivity, had slain the spirit of idolatry, which had, from the days of Moses, poisoned the Hebrew life, and the marvellous reaction which has endured for nearly 2,400 years among the Chosen People set in.† The law of Moses was restored with terrible sternness—synagogues were established, the Sopherim were constituted, and, under the guidance of Ezra, the sacred books which form the Old Testament canon probably were finally cast into their present shape; then, by degrees, thanks to their labours and that of their successors, that marvellous compilation known as the Talmud grew round the sacred books; first probably in the form of oral traditional "decisions" respecting the full bearing and signification of the precepts of the Mosaic law generally termed *Halakha*, later known, when committed to writing, as the *Mishna;* secondly, but considerably later, in the form of oral explanations and comments and legends founded upon the Decisions (Halakha). These are generally termed *Haggada*, and later known, when committed to writing, as the *Gemara;* the Mishna and Gemara were subsequently known as the *Talmud*.

* Hawthorne's "Transformation," chapter vi. The writer of this sketch here takes the opportunity of gratefully acknowledging his thanks to Professor Cheyne, of whose learning and research, though not always of the conclusions drawn, the writer has freely availed himself.

† The Talmud account of this is as follows: "Ezra established a Fast Day, on which he and the Levites prayed to God with loud cries to banish idolatry from the people. A billet fell from Heaven, on which was written the word 'granted.' After three days and nights the spirit of idolatry was delivered to them like a flaming lion, which bounded out of the Holy of Holies. By the advice of the prophet Zechariah, they seized it and flung it into a leaden coffin hermetically sealed."—Treatise "Yoma," f. 67; Treatise "Sanhedrin," fol. 14, col. 1.

To these early, at first, oral teachings which began with Ezra and his companions, and which subsequently expanded into the Mishna and Gemara, we must add the Masorah, which was also the work of the schools of scholars founded by Ezra, and which became, as the Rabbis termed it, "a fence to the Scriptures." The Masorah busied itself only with the text of the old Hebrew Scriptures, and took careful account of every letter and every verse of the sacred writings; as it now exists in writing, its date is uncertain; in its original oral form it doubtless began its work not long after the days of Ezra.

Ezra founded and organized the first great school for the collection, putting in order, and editing, and subsequently commenting upon the Holy Scripture, including the law, the prophets, and the sacred poetry such as the Psalms and other books deemed holy, which have, since his days, now about 2,400 years ago, formed the canon of Old Testament Scripture. This school or college of Ezra's is known in Jewish story as "The Men of the Great Synagogue," and these we may regard as the fathers of Rabbinism. According to Maimonides, the great Jewish scholar and writer, these were 120 in number and commenced with Haggai * the Prophet, who is referred to frequently in the Talmud as the expounder of the Oral Law.† These "Men of the Great Synagogue" of Ezra were, according to ancient Jewish tradition, in direct succession from Moses.

Moses received the law on Mount Sinai and gave it to Joshua, Joshua committed it to the Elders, the Elders committed it to the Prophets (*i.e.* schools of the Prophets), and the Prophets committed it to the "Men of the Great Synagogue" ‡ of Ezra after the Captivity.

It was these earnest and devoted men, of whom personally, with the exception of Ezra and Haggai, we know so little, who, we believe, sorted, arranged, and selected the papers and memoranda of Isaiah, and among other labours connected with the Book of the Old Testament canon, gave us the Book of Isaiah the prophet in the form we now possess it.

* Talmud, Treatise Yevamoth, f. 16, p. 2.

† Pirke Avoth, i., Avoth of Rabbi Nathan, i.

‡ The School of the Great Synagogue lasted with the Sopherim 138 years. It was in this period, we believe, that the canon was definitely settled. Maimonides reckons rather a longer period for the work of the "Men of the Great Synagogue" from Haggai, B.C. 520, to Simon the Just, B.C. 300.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

1. *The Times of the Prophet.*—Different to Isaiah, and it may be said, to the rest of the "goodly fellowship of the prophets," we possess full information as to the life and work of Jeremiah. Indeed, the book of his prophecy is so closely interwoven with the events of his stormy life, that to grasp the meaning of the prophecies, we must have the life-story unrolled before us.

To understand the meaning of the story, some knowledge of the history of that sad age is especially needful. It was not long before Jeremiah was born that the life and work of the great Isaiah came to an end; the apostasy and subsequent repentance of Manasseh, in whose reign Isaiah was murdered, must have been still fresh in the memory of men in the early years of Jeremiah.

King Esarhaddon of Nineveh avenged the great disaster of Sennacherib, his father, before Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah when Hezekiah reigned, by taking the holy city and by leading captive her king, Hezekiah's son Manasseh, to Babylon. Manasseh was subsequently released, and consented as a vassal king to Nineveh to hold Judah. Assurbanipal, most probably the "great and noble Asnapper" of Ezra, succeeded Esarhaddon, his father, *circa* B.C. 666. The Ninevite king resided principally in Babylon, which was already showing signs of dissatisfaction with the Ninevite rule. He was evidently a strong sovereign, and completely broke the Egyptian power by dividing Egypt into twelve petty kingdoms. During his reign Judah remained a tributary to Nineveh.

In the seventeenth year though of the reign of this Assurbanipal, king of Nineveh, Psametichus restored the broken unity of Egypt, and once more united the whole land. Egypt now,

for a season, disputed the sovereignty of the Eastern world with Nineveh. When this restoration of Egypt to the position of a great power took place, Manasseh was in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, and from this time gradually grew up that strong inclination in Judah to court the friendship of Egypt, which eventually proved its ruin. Politically, the great work of Jeremiah's life was to combat this fatal policy. Manasseh was succeeded by Amon, and Amon by the good king Josiah. During Josiah's reign Jeremiah exercised great influence. This prince lost his life fighting against Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. Four years after its victory at Megiddo, the Egyptian power was totally destroyed at Carchemish by a new power which had lately risen on the ruins of the old Ninevite dominion.

The power of Nineveh probably had been for some time declining, partly owing to a great invasion of Scythians, partly to the discontent of Babylon, a discontent which ended in Babylon asserting its independence. The Eastern world, two years after the battle of Megiddo, in which Josiah lost his life, was astonished at learning that Nineveh, so long the Queen City of the East, had fallen before the armies of Cyaxares the Mede and Nabopolassar, king of the recently freed Babylon. The ruin of Nineveh was complete. Two years later the son of Nabopolassar, the famous Nebuchadnezzar broke the Egyptian power at Carchemish.

The great Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar was temporarily stayed in his career of conquest by his father's death, and the need of his presence at Babylon in order to consolidate his power. Egypt and her vassal states became now subject to Babylon. Amongst these latter was Judah and her king, Jehoiakim, who succeeded Josiah.

After three years Jehoiakim rebelled against the authority of Babylon; Nebuchadnezzar in person took the field against his rebellious vassal. Jerusalem was invested and soon fell. Her king was put to death, and a few months later Jehoiachin—who succeeded his father in the sad sovereignty—was, with the flower of the people, carried away captive to Babylon. A poor remnant was left in Judah, and Zedekiah reigned as their king. Again Egypt became their snare. Something like a revival of the Egyptian power had taken place under Pharaoh Hophra; the miserable remnant of Jews left under King Zedekiah in Judah, turning against their mighty Babylonian master, sought to strengthen themselves by an alliance with Egypt, against the advice of Jeremiah, who had remained with Zedekiah in Judah. The Chaldean vengeance did not tarry long; again was Jerusalem besieged, again captured. Then the Temple was burnt, the king

was blinded, the best of the poor remnant of the people left by Nebuchadnezzar were carried into Babylonia. Gedaliah, a friend of Jeremiah, was appointed governor of the now desolate and almost deserted land.

Gedaliah was shortly after murdered by some self-styled patriot Jews, who, after their deed of blood, fled, carrying Jeremiah, an unwilling captive, with them to the city of Tahpanhes, in Egypt. Here we lose sight of the aged and desolate prophet. A tradition, well supported, relates how his angry countrymen, infuriated at the mournful reproaches and earnest remonstrances of Jeremiah, stoned the dreaded and hated prophet some time after the arrival of the fugitives at Tahpanhes.

The following tables of dates and principal historical events which happened in the life of Jeremiah will be useful to the reader, but it must be borne in mind that though roughly the general chronological arrangement is fairly reliable, any *exact* chronological arrangement of this period is precarious and certainly open to criticism. The first table is generally taken from Professor H. Brandes' "The Royal Succession of Judah and Israel, according to the Biblical Narrative and the Cuneiform Inscriptions," quoted by Professor Cheyne, "Jeremiah" in the "Pulpit Commentary."

MANASSEH, in whose reign Isaiah was, according to tradition, put to death.
|
AMON.
|

B.C.	
641	First year of Josiah. In the thirteenth year of Josiah, the "Word of the Lord" came to Jeremiah. The ministry of Jeremiah especially belongs to the last eighteen years of Josiah's reign.
611	Thirty-first year of Josiah.
610	Jehoahaz.
609	First year of Jehoiakim.
599	Eleventh year of Jehoiachin.
598-7	Jehoiachin. Beginning of the Captivity.
597	Zedekiah appointed king.
596	First year of Zedekiah.
586	Eleventh year of Zedekiah. Fall of the kingdom of Judah.

After the Fall of Judah as a Kingdom.

Gedaliah is left in Judah as governor of the remnant of the people allowed to remain in the land.

Jeremiah remains with him.

Gedaliah is murdered, and Jeremiah is carried away by the Jews who murdered Gedaliah into Egypt.

At Tahpanes, in Egypt, probably not long after, the Jewish fugitives murdered Jeremiah.

Foreign Political Events which materially affected the History of Judah and Jerusalem during the Last Period of its History.

Assurbanipal had succeeded his father Esarhaddon, the son and successor of Sennacherib, as king of Assyria. He divided Egypt into twelve separate states, and rendered it for a time powerless, until Psametichus, in the seventeenth year of Assurbanipal, again united the whole country. It was this sudden growth of great power in Egypt which caused statesmen in Judah to turn their thoughts towards winning Egypt as a friend and protector against the great Eastern power on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris.

Acting though under the advice of Jeremiah, Josiah encountered Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo, and was defeated and slain. Some two years after the battle of Megiddo, Nineveh fell before the armies of Cyaxares and Nabopolassar. Babylon now takes the place of Nineveh, and for a time held almost undisputed sovereignty over the East.

The power of Egypt had been previously broken by the defeat of Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar the son, and subsequently the successor, of Nabopolassar at Babylon.

2. *The Mission of Jeremiah.*—Although scarcely more than a generation had passed away since the death of Isaiah, when Josiah attempted his reformation, the moral state of Judah had grown sensibly worse. The evils which had long threatened the nation under the wicked king Manasseh, definitely showed themselves, and king and people openly threw off the restraints imposed by the religion of Jehovah, and made a public profession of idolatry. In the gloomy reign of terror which Manasseh inaugurated, Isaiah, and most of the nobler spirits who had gathered round him in the reign of Manasseh's father, Hezekiah, were hunted down and put to a cruel death. The swift and sudden judgment which overtook king and city seems to have acted as a solemn warning, and we read how Manasseh repented, and how, after his restoration to a throne in partial subjection to Nineveh, during a long life and reign, he and his people again served the Jehovah of their fathers. But the evil let loose by the strange and fearful licence of the early days of his reign was too strong, and the idol-worship and its terrible influence upon the hearts of the people, though outwardly put away, still exercised its baneful, withering power, till it had destroyed all that was left of real life in Judah.

But outwardly, after Manasseh and his son Amon had passed away, and Josiah, with his earnest longing to do what was right and just in the sight of the Lord, had come to the throne, all seemed well in Judah. Prosperity was returning; the old dark shadow of Nineveh, then beginning to decline in power, brooded with less and ever less baleful influence over Judah and its more remote tributaries. Egypt was scarcely then a real danger, and Josiah the king had at his right hand one of those strong mighty men of God, of whom we hear alone in that

eventful Israelite story—Jeremiah the prophet. It was in the thirteenth year of Josiah that the "Word of the Lord" came upon Jeremiah, and armed him for his life's great work.

But all was wrong within the doomed land. To use the words of another and an older seer, "the whole head was sick, and the heart was faint." Jerusalem—and Jerusalem set the example to all the smaller towns and cities—was full of licentiousness and open disregard for all equity and honour. Jeremiah even accuses the professing worshippers of the Lord of the gravest crimes, such as murder and adultery, perjury and theft. These wicked citizens were to have one last chance. The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and sent him to them with this last solemn message from the Eternal of Hosts. If they would hear him and repent, well; if not, the ruin and desolation of the land would surely follow. Alas for Judah! the message was practically disregarded, and the city and the glorious temple were ruined, and the king and people carried into captivity, far away from the Land of Promise, for many a weary year.

The earnest efforts of King Josiah and the great prophet who stood by him to reform the people failed. Outwardly some effect was produced. The open practice of idolatry was given up, the ceremonial part of God's law was again performed with strict punctuality. But there, generally speaking, the work of reformation ended.

The people believed that this was enough to win for themselves and their land the splendid promises we read in Deuteronomy promised to the faithful and true Jew; but the weightier matters of the law, justice, purity, integrity, true nobleness of heart and purpose, were utterly neglected, and the old life, abhorred of God, went on as it did aforetime. No one saw this more clearly than did Jeremiah. He went on delivering his message, but as time passed by, and as the people's guilt became heavier each year, and their own strange satisfaction with themselves continued, his words became more ominous, his general tone more and more despairing.

When all hope of a real reformation was given up by the man of God, then, like the captain of a ship which is plainly foundering makes the last melancholy arrangements for his crew by means of open boats and rafts, so Jeremiah in his utter despair, hoping to make the impending ruin a less cruel fate, pressed upon the doomed people to submit without useless resistance to the powerful Chaldean invader, who, Jeremiah knew, with no mortal insight, was the appointed instrument of Judah's punishment. But here again his voice was not heeded, and the awful doom in all its terrible detail was carried out.

What a heavy, overwhelming burden was laid on the patriotic prophet, to know of the frightful danger which hung over his loved Judah and Jerusalem, and the glorious holy house on Zion—an awful danger from that great nation whose sudden rise to enormous power he, Jeremiah, saw in the vista of no distant future, a vista clearly open to the seer's vision: a rise to colossal power vigorously portrayed by a seer contemporary with Jeremiah.

"Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

"For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs." (Habakkuk i. 5, 6.)

To know of this swift, oncoming danger, to know, too, that this impending danger might be warded off, and the help of the "Glorious Arm" once more vouchsafed to the loved city, if the people would only hearken to his words, and with heart and soul turn unto the Lord; to watch the people utterly careless and godless, growing year by year more self-satisfied as they grow more shameless; to be compelled, sick at heart and despairing, positively to preach as their best, their only hope, submission to an invader, an idolatrous conqueror, and even then to find his words disregarded, and himself positively branded as a traitor,—well might Jeremiah utter, at different epochs of that sad life of his, these well-known melancholy plaints: "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed," &c. (xx. 14); "Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day" (xiv. 17); "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed?" (xv. 18.) See, too, viii. 22, ix. 1, and many other similar passages—some of an exquisite, an inimitable beauty—as he mourned over the coming doom of the hapless nation—a doom he, with all his supernatural knowledge and power, was utterly unable to avert.

A modern commentator has with great power summed up the reasons for the intense sorrow of the sad and touching prophecy of Jeremiah—prophecy quite unheeded and neglected in the great seer's lifetime, though afterward, when through pain and agony he had passed to his rest, this unheeded prophecy became the favourite book of the scattered and ruined people.

"His style is in keeping with the man. He spake as he thought. Ever brooding over his message to his people, it presented itself to his mind in many aspects, but was in substance ever the same; we have no change of subjects in his prophecy. Whatever there is of novelty arises simply from the altered state

of external circumstances. Slowly the sad drama advances towards the sole possible conclusion; year after year the prophet saw Judah sliding lower and lower down to the very edge of the fearful precipice of national ruin, and at each stage of its downward progress he could but repeat the old warning; like the Zealots who ran about the streets of Jerusalem before its second destruction, he has but the one cry of "Woe!" All he can do is to adapt his unvarying tale to the present state of things, and present it under new images." *

3. *Was Jeremiah's Life-work a Failure?*—Judged by the ordinary standards of success and failure, no public life could be painted which was more conspicuously an example of failure than the prophet Jeremiah's, as sketched out mainly by himself.

Called early in life, by some striking supernatural phenomenon, to his high service, the young seer thus splendidly gifted naturally expected a large measure of success. He had before his eyes the great example shown and the noble work done scarcely more than a generation back by the heroic and honoured Isaiah, when once more king and people with heart and soul had thrown themselves, in real faith, beneath the eternal throne of their Divine King; and once more, as in old days, the Glorious Arm had fought for them and won for them a deliverance the fame of which rung through the East and which procured for Judah some years of peace and prosperity. Surely the Word of the Lord had called him, Jeremiah, to a similar mighty work.

By his side, too, stood a king, Josiah, not unlike his famous predecessor, Hezekiah, who with real earnestness made it his life-work to remove every vestige of idolatry, and the infamy which hung round idol-worship, out of the land. It turned out very different, however, to his bright hopes; all seemed against him. As it has been truly said, "There are times when the Holy Spirit Himself seems to work in vain, and the world seems given up to the powers of evil." The strong efforts of the king and the burning words of the prophet only effected a popular reformation of ritual. Life remained untouched. The outward ceremonial religion was certainly restored in Judah and Jerusalem, but city and country still went on living the life abhorred of God. Josiah, the prophet's friend, the earnest and devoted king, was defeated and slain at Megiddo in the war with Egypt. Then things grew worse: Josiah's successor, the irreligious Jehoiakim, became the willing vassal of Egypt. He naturally

* Canon Rawlinson, in the "Speaker's Commentary."

disliked Jeremiah and poured scorn upon his prophecies. Then commenced what may be termed the second and saddest period of the prophet's life, when the Word of the Lord told him that the times of reformation were past, and that all hope of change of heart in Judah was over and gone. The seer had a bitter task before him. He would soften if he could the stroke ready to descend upon his nation, so he counselled submission to that great and warlike power, Babylon, the appointed instrument of the punishment of God. Again he was doomed to disappointment. The sovereign, the hierarchy, and the nobles utterly refused to listen to him, and chose rather to lean upon the broken reed of Egypt, their hereditary foe, and thus positively precipitated the final ruin, and Jeremiah for his wise advice was branded as a traitor to his country. During that long sad life of Jeremiah, made up of disappointments, baffled hopes, even despair, we catch sight of scenes of the bitterest persecution. Now the roll of his writings, with the impress of the seal of the Spirit of God visibly upon them, is publicly and ignominiously torn up and burnt; now we see him, one of the foremost statesmen, enduring the cruel indignity of the stocks; now we find him immured in a noisome, impure dungeon, now hunted down as a traitor and spy; and at last we see him, an old man worn out by sorrow and hopeless toil, carried away the captive of his determined opponents into Egypt, the land against which he had so often in vain warned his fellow-countrymen; and then in an unfriendly nation, surrounded by Jews, exiles and fugitives, among his bitterest foes, we lose sight of the great seer, still speaking words of tenderest warning and most earnest reminders to repentance. Tradition writes the last sad chapter of that sad, bravely patient life, and tells us how, in return for his true and faithful witness, his enemies stoned him to death.

In less than a century after the prophet's death, Jewish opinion respecting Jeremiah and his prophecies completely changed. On the return from Babylon, impressed no doubt by the marvellous fulfilment of the great seer's words respecting the duration of the seventy years' exile, his writings were received—most probably by Ezra and his revisionist scribes—among the sacred Hebrew writings; and in the Babylonian revision, strange to say, Jeremiah, not Isaiah, was placed first among the writings of the great prophets, the order being Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah.

The touching sadness and the burning faith of his words found a perpetual echo in the hearts of the restored and humbled Jews Round him gathered a mass of reverent tradition. Men said he had taken the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense,

and had hidden them in a safe hiding-place somewhere among the rugged fastnesses of Mount Nebo, till the hour should strike when God shall gather together once more the people whom He loves (see 2 Macc. xi. 1—8). Jeremiah was that antique patriot hero who appeared to the gallant Judas Maccabæus as "a man with grey hairs, and exceeding glorious," as one who "prayed much for the holy city." Jeremiah was the prophet of the Lord who gave the same hero "a golden sword with which he shall fight the battles of the Lord" (2 Macc. xv. 13—16).

In the days of Jesus Christ, he, like Elijah, was looked for to prepare the way for Messiah. Some even said of Jesus that He *was* Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, Jeremiah being singled out of the glorious company as the most popular representative.

Even in early Christian story the once misjudged prophet played a distinguished part, and exposition pointed to Jeremiah as one of the "two witnesses" of Rev. xi. 3. Eusebius (Praep. Evang. ix. 39) relates how the story of his sufferings, so bravely and patiently endured, ranked alongside the more famous accounts of Christian martyrs.

Verily, though not here, not now, did this true servant of the Living God "see of the travail of his soul and was satisfied."

4. *The Absence of Messianic Prophecy in Jeremiah.*—The almost entire absence of all reference to a coming Messiah in this book is on first thoughts remarkable. Different from his great predecessor Isaiah, who lived little more than a generation before him, the key-note of whose prophecy was the advent of the great coming One, though generally as a suffering teacher, who, though suffering, would redeem those who listen to him, than as a glorious and triumphing king. Different even from the rougher and shorter prophecies like Micah, where Messianic hopes colour, so to speak, each solemn section of the writing. Different to them, Jeremiah is almost silent. There is just a reference here and there as in xxx. 9, 21, xxxiii. 15, and a few similar passages, but the great bulk of the prophecies are silent as to Messianic onlook. The nature of his task, for the most part, alas! excluded hope. To speak of the victorious king would, in the case of Jeremiah's hearers, have been but to raise fallacious expectations, and to tell so blind and stubborn, so self-willed and perfectly self-satisfied a generation, of salvation through suffering would have simply aroused a storm of contumely and of scorn.

Jeremiah's task was not that of a herald of the great coming One; but though not a herald he was a pioneer, a pioneer of the truest kind. He lived that strange beautiful life of utter self-forgetfulness, of suffering voluntarily undergone for others. He set the example—an example imitated by thousands of his un-

happy countrymen in coming generations—of the purest and most devoted patriotism. See how closely did his typical life resemble in many particulars the inimitable life of lives. "He stood alone, with few friends and no family joys to console him; his country was hastening to its ruin at a crisis which strikingly reminds us of the times of our Saviour. He lifted up a warning voice, but the natural guides of the people drowned it by their blind opposition. . . . The prophet weeping over Zion, chap. ix. 1, xiii. 17, xiv. 17, is an adumbration of the sacred tears in St. Luke xix. 41." *

The character of Jeremiah is a singularly interesting one. Different to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, and the majority of the more prominent prophets of Israel, Jeremiah was, comparatively speaking, little influenced by those great powers of supernatural wisdom and of unerring insight down the dark vista of coming years. He was, so to speak, more human than the majority of his brothers in the glorious company of the prophets. Ever sensitive to public opinion, tender-hearted, even timorous, well-nigh always hopeless, we find him, in spite of these characteristics, unswervingly true to his high calling, never shrinking from carrying out his painful mission and proclaiming his unpopular message: a noble example, as it has been well said, of the triumph of the moral over the physical nature. His whole strength lay in his determination to do what was right at whatever cost.†

In the Sistine Chapel, where Michael Angelo has happily caught the spirit of Jeremiah, he is portrayed as brooding, with eyes cast down, in sad thought. It was, indeed, a sorrowful and a weary task for the patriot prophet to be for so many long years ever the prophet of ill, to be always foretelling a future in which the sword, the famine, and the pestilence were the chief agents.

Of the many devoted patriot hearts in the long, many-coloured story of the chosen people, none ever beat with a more passionate devotion for his country than did Jeremiah's. It was his strange sad destiny to have given to him as his life-work the task of preaching to a people who would not hear him, and who, in their blind folly year by year, approached nearer the awful ruin which, as Jeremiah knew, hung over temple and city. No Jew has ever mourned with such true and tender sympathy over the lost glories and the sad and hopeless destinies of his race as did Jeremiah. His words, for centuries, were used as the expression of the thoughts of the exiled and down-trodden Hebrew. Again,

* Prof Cheyne, "Jeremiah," in the "Pulpit Commentary," vol. i. ch. xiv.
† Dean Payne Smith.

far beyond the Hebrew people, his beautiful and touching plaints have become folk-songs and folk-proverbs; such as:—

"Is there no balm in Gilead;
Is there no physician there?
Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"
(vii. 22.)

"Stand ye in the ways, and see,
And ask for the old paths, where is the good way,
And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
But they said, We will not walk therein." (vi. 16.)

"Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable?" (xv. 18.)

"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping;
Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children,
Because they were not." (xxxi. 15.)

5. *The Language and Style of Jeremiah.*—For general readers Jeremiah has far less interest than Isaiah or Daniel, and with the exception, perhaps, of Ezekiel, finds fewer students outside the Jewish world than any book of the Old Testament. Certain passages are very familiar, but, outside these, comparatively little is commonly known.

The language is charged with monotony and the style with diffuseness, as dealing with a period characterised with a dreary sameness of sin and folly, and unrelieved by any recitals of specially heroic deeds; and which, unlike to the usual story of Israel, is never illumined by any conspicuous interposition of the Glorious Arm of Jehovah.

To a considerable extent these and such-like popular criticisms are just. Its monotony could not be helped, for one subject, the sin of the people, their blindness and self-will, and the sure and certain ruin at the end of a comparatively speaking short period of time, too plainly foreseen, in all its melancholy details, by the prophet—one subject filled his heart from the hour of his first solemn call to that sad day when we lose sight of him, the unpopular prophet, the author—as some affirmed—of their woes, at Tahpanhes in Egypt.

To the ordinary Gentile reader, too, the prophecy of Jeremiah seems diffuse, for it is the same old story told again and again. It wants the art of Isaiah, and we miss the poetry and the lofty imagery which form the beautiful characteristic of so many passages in the other prophetic books. But it has been urged with great justice that in Jeremiah, "His poetic flights were restrained by his presentiments, and his utterances dulled by tears. How could he exercise his imagination in depicting woes which he already so fully realised?" *

* Dean Payne Smith in "Pulpit Commentary."

Another commentator, with considerable truth, loves to compare this prophet with Dante, and thinks that in the pages of Jeremiah "the great Florentine found one of the founts of his inspiration, for he quotes him again and again, both in his poetry and in his prose, even borrowing from him the opening symbolism of the Divina Commedia." *

6. *The Divergences between the Masoretic (Hebrew) and LXX. Greek Text.*—There are some curious divergences between the Masoretic text as contained in our Hebrew Bible (from whence our English Authorised Version was made) and the Greek text of the Septuagint. But although the variations are extremely numerous, and the position of a large section of the prophecy is different in the Greek and Hebrew, the variations are really of an unimportant description. We may fairly speak of the Masoretic (Hebrew), and the LXX. texts as being substantially the same.

All the chapters containing the group of the prophecies "on foreign nations" are differently arranged. In the Hebrew text this particular group is found in chapters xlvi.—li. In the LXX. they are found after chapter xxv. 13.

But the variations of the LXX. text are far more singular. It has been computed that the Greek (LXX.) version omits some 2,700 words of the Masoretic (Hebrew) text. It adds but a very few. Words and phrases which ever and again occur in the Hebrew are dropped in the Greek version. For instance, Jeremiah is rarely termed *the prophet;* Jehovah rarely has the title "of Hosts" added; the formula "saith Jehovah" is left out by the Greek translators more than sixty times. It would thus appear that, for some cause or other, the Greek text aimed at abbreviating the original Hebrew, but it evidently studiedly avoided omitting anything which really bore on the sense. This careful abbreviation, which really only affected titles and redundant and purely rhetorical words and phrases, was a most valuable indication to us of the estimation in which the prophecies of Jeremiah were held when the LXX. translators did their work for the Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt, B.C. 285—150. With an evident strong desire, for some reason or other, to abbreviate as much as possible, they carefully refrained from taking away one of the precious sentences of the prophecies and exhortations of their loved and revered seer.

It is, of course, quite possible that two editors, so to speak, of Jeremiah existed, and that the LXX. translators had before them the shorter edition or revision. Dean Payne Smith, with great

* E. H. Plumptre, Dean of Wells.

ingenuity, suggests a reason for this "shorter edition." After the death (probably a violent death) of Jeremiah in Egypt, Baruch and the faithful companions of the prophet no doubt left in all haste a country so hostile to their loved master. Naturally they would carry back with them to Palestine, as their chiefest treasure, the writings of the great teacher. But among the fugitive Jews in Egypt there were doubtless "true believers, who would not allow such a precious document to be taken away without a copy being left behind." Such a transcript would in the nature of things be a hurried one; superfluous words and phrases, likely enough, would be omitted. Probably, too, no definite place in the writings had been at that time assigned to the "displaced" section containing "the prophecies concerning the nations," which, no doubt, possessed a less interest for the people than the inspired words relating to themselves. This is a most ingenious conjecture, but still only conjecture. The phenomenon of the strange divergence between the texts, the Hebrew and the Greek, of "Jeremiah" is really unexplained. The only two omissions, however, of any real importance are chapters xxxiii. 14—26, xxxix. 4—13.

7. *The Death of King Josiah.*—Between the life and work of Jeremiah and Isaiah there are many interesting parallel scenes, none perhaps so interesting for the general student as the life and fate of King Josiah. The two great prophets both lived through several reigns. In both instances these reigns, with one exception in each case, were productive of grave evil for Judah and Jerusalem, the sovereigns and their courts setting generally a shameful example. But one considerable portion of the life of both the prophets was passed in the company of a noble and heroic king, who loved the law of the Lord. In the midst of their successful and comparatively happy reigns the angel of death overshadowed Hezekiah and Josiah. Hezekiah, owing to the intercession of Isaiah, was spared for ten more glorious and successful years. Josiah, though acting under the direct advice of Jeremiah, was slain, fighting for his country, on the fatal field of Megiddo. Men are tempted to question often the Divine decree when a good and useful life is suddenly cut off. The death of Josiah, the favourite—as he has been termed—"of God and man," will supply an answer to such querulous questioning. We see the reason of his early death quite clearly. Josiah had done his work faithfully, but the work we know was a failure, and the hero-king was taken away from the evil to come. To have prolonged his life, like Hezekiah's, would have been a sad guerdon. The glorious death on the battle-field and the eternal hereafter with his God was for Josiah the best.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

1. What is the Book of Lamentations—that short collection of poems with no author's name appended to it in the Hebrew text? The Book of Lamentations consists of five elegies, carefully composed according to certain standards of Hebrew poetry. Three of these, the first, the second, and the fourth, have certain common characteristics. Each begins with the word "echah" (how). Each is of the peculiar form of Hebrew verse known as "alphabetical"—that is, every verse, or half verse, or little group of verses, begins with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet: a not uncommon form of poetry, of which Psalm cxix. is the best known example. See also for examples, more or less perfect, of this alphabetical arrangement of poetry, Psalms xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii. cxix., cxlv., and Proverbs xxxi. 10—31. Slight irregularities in the arrangement, however, occur in these elegies.

2. Jerusalem, after the fall and ruin of the city at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, long predicted by Jeremiah, is the general subject of all the five elegies; of the three, (first, second, and fourth), in which considerable points of likeness occur: the first dwells on the sad, ruined city, Zion. The second sings of the "fons et origo" of the woe of Zion—Jehovah, who at last has carried out the awful threats of punishment on a wicked people. The theme of the fourth depicts the sufferings of the various classes of the people at the hands of their conquerors.

The third of these elegies again is distinguished by the alphabetical structure of the poetry. It is even more artificial in its arrangement than the first, second, and fourth. It too dwells on the sorrow of the people, but it is more personal. The writer in this poem speaks of himself as "the man that has seen the affliction" (Lamentations iii.).

The fifth is different, in its composition: it is not strictly alphabetical, like the first four poems. Only in the number of

verses—twenty-two, the number of Hebrew letters—does it suggest the same artificial arrangement. The "ruin of Zion" is still the groundwork of the poem; but the writer, before the end of his sorrowful song, seems to speak as though this ruin was an event which had taken place years before (see verse 20).

3. *The Authorship of the Lamentations.*—The Septuagint (Greek version), B.C. *circa* 285, clearly states that the author of Lamentations was the Prophet Jeremiah. The seventy translators have prefixed the following words to their version: "And it came to pass after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, that Jeremias sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said." This statement is repeated in the Vulgate (Latin version) with some slight additions. Josephus, in the first century of our era, endorses the above Septuagint gloss, seemingly identifying these elegies with the "Lamentations" which, we read in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, the Prophet Jeremiah composed for the funeral of King Josiah. The Talmudists also assume that Jeremiah was the author of the book (see Talmud, Bava Bathra, fol. 15, col. i.); and the general consensus of Jewish and Christian writers ascribe the five chapters of Lamentations to the same prophet.

One link, and that the most important, however, is missing in this chain of historic testimony. It does not appear in the Hebrew text which those most careful and painstaking Masoretic editors have given us, although, as it has been well urged, seeing that these Masoretic scribes, who no doubt (see reference above about Talmud, Bava Bathra) believed themselves in the Jeremiah authorship, would have been the last to have omitted this all-important testimony to the authorship. But the Hebrew text omits the name of Jeremiah.

4. *Internal Testimony.*—The whole style of these poems, though exquisitely beautiful and touching, and studded with the thoughts of the great prophet, is absolutely different to anything we find in the long roll of Jeremiah's great work. It is too artificial, too much studied, too elaborately worked out. The internal evidence would seem to point to it having been the work of pious, cultured Jews, deeply imbued with the spirit and thought of Jeremiah; living at the time of the great catastrophe; eye-witnesses of the ruin wrought by Nebuchednezzar and the Chaldeans; not improbably pupils and friends of Jeremiah, but nameless, like so many of the Greek scribes and compilers who lived and worked contemporary with Ezra, or shortly after his time.

5. *Its Place in the Jewish Canon.*—It was evidently admitted into the canon of inspired writings at the earliest date, no doubt

by Ezra and the Men of the Great Synagogue; but these ancients never placed it in the position it now occupies in the Septuagint and Vulgate, or in an English Bible. It appears in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text between Ruth and Koheleth (Ecclesiastes), among the generally nameless K'thuvim or Hagiographa.

There is no question as to the high estimation in which these sweet sad songs were held by the people from very early days. It is evident that Zechariah at the end of the Captivity is quoting them in his first chapter, verse 6. On the 9th day of Ab, a very ancient fast-day, commemorating the burning of the Temple, these plaintive and touching Lamentations were read in the synagogues. Pilgrims, who after all these many centuries of exile, still gather in Jerusalem at the "place of wailing" by the wall which yet remains of the ruins of their holy beautiful house, are said to often use these sad songs as they weep and pray.

In the Latin Church in Holy Week the Book of Lamentations is used on the three last days of the week: and the Church of England, at the last revision* of her lectionary, has woven them into the beautiful tapestry of her services for the same solemn season.

* In the Revision of 1871, chapter iii. and portions of chapters i., ii., and iv. were ordered to be read on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. Portions of Lamentations had been appointed to be read in Holy Week in the first book of Edward VI., but that use was not continued in the second book of Edward VI., or in any subsequent revision of the Prayer Book until 1871.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

1. Ezekiel, as the book which bears his name stands in our own and the Hebrew canon, is the first prophet who proclaims his message from the land of his captivity. The Book of Daniel opens with the third year of Jehoiachin, but Ezekiel begins with the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Daniel, therefore, had probably preceded Ezekiel into exile, and undoubtedly outlived him, but they were in exile together, though far distant from each other. Ezekiel was of priestly family, the son of Buzi. As, however, the name of his father is not otherwise mentioned in Scripture, we know no more about him. In the Jerusalem Targum the son of Buzi (the despised one) is interpreted to mean the son of Jeremiah, because he was despised. This is, of course, of no other value than as showing that there was a kind of natural succession in the two men.

In the narrative of Jehoiachin's captivity, in the Book of Kings, no mention is made of any priests among the captives, but only of "princes," "officers," and "mighty men of valour," among whom rather than the "craftsmen and smiths" Ezekiel must have found his place, being, as Josephus says, "then but young" (Ant. x. 6, 3). The prophet describes himself as among the captives by the river of Chebar, which has by some been identified with the Chaboras or Khabour, a tributary of the Euphrates, flowing into it near Circesium, Carchemish, Karkisia; but as this river is said to have been "in the land of the Chaldees," and it is doubtful whether the Khabour was included in that district, it has been supposed that the river Chebar may be identified with the Nahr Malcha or royal canal, which was cut by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, and in making which many Jews were not improbably employed. As Chebar was equivalent to "great," it is quite possible that this name may have been applied to that canal as well as to any other large river of the country, but it does not help us to any nearer identification of Ezekiel's abode. All that is certain seems to be the impossibility

of identifying this latter river with the "Halah and *Habor* by the river of Gozan" to which Shalmaneser transported the Israelites in the reign of Hezekiah. The initial letters in the two words are totally different, and by no means to be confounded. There is, however, an inherent difficulty in supposing that an artificial canal was magnified by the designation "great river," though as a matter of fact the word *nahar* is common to both. (Cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 1.)

2. *Date.*—Ezekiel begins his prophecy with very precise specication of the year, month, and day in which the heavens were opened and he saw the visions of God; but though he says it was the thirtieth year we are at a loss to know from what date it is to be reckoned, whether from his own birth or, as some have supposed, from the finding of the law in the Temple, or, as others have conjectured, from the era of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, who came to the throne B.C. 625, which would all nearly correspond. This question, however interesting, is the less important, inasmuch as the thirtieth year is further specified as the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. As, however, no other indication whatever of date is given by the prophet, it seems most natural to understand the thirtieth year as that of his own age. As this was the time at which the Levites entered on their service (Num. iv. 23, 30) it seems to give a very probable date. This was also the age at which our Lord began His ministry (Luke iii. 23).

That the prophet should without any notice make mention of a Babylonian era, which may or may not have been in ordinary use, seems highly improbable; and there is no evidence that any particular era was in use among the Jews, and no reason to believe that the finding of the Book of the Law would have furnished the basis of such an era. From his frequent mention of the sons of Zadoc (xl. 46; xliii. 19; xliv. 15, 16) as the priests, it is supposed that he was himself of this family. There is no reference to him in the canonical books of the Old Testament, though he makes mention himself of his contemporary Daniel, and in the enumeration of the worthies in Ecclus. xlix. 8, 9, he is spoken of as he "who saw the glorious vision which was showed him upon the chariot of the cherubims, for he made mention of the enemies under the figure of the rain, and directed them that went aright." (See xiii. 11; xxxviii. 9, 22, &c.) Ezekiel was partly contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel, but Jeremiah had begun to prophesy thirty-four years before Ezekiel, and continued to do so for some six or seven years after his first vision; and as Daniel lived till the third year of Cyrus (Dan. x. 1), he in all probability long survived Ezekiel, the commencement

of whose ministry, as we have seen, nearly corresponded with that of his own captivity.

3. *His Name.*—As was so often the case with the prophets and other biblical celebrities, the name of Ezekiel was significant, though in this instance its significance was of general rather than specific appropriateness. There is always room for doubt as to the exact way in which the component words are intended to be understood in the case of proper names, and all that we can be sure of here is the existence of the two elements, "God," and the verb "strengthen," in the name Ezekiel, but whether it implied that God would strengthen, or "prevail," or "hold by the hand," it is difficult to say. Freely, the name might be understood to mean the "strength of God," but what was the more precise significance of the word it would be hard to determine. In probable reference to his own name, Ezekiel says of himself, in iii. 14, "the hand of the Lord was strong upon me." (Cf. vv. 8, 9.) In 1 Ch. xxiv. 16, we find mention made of a priest of this name in the time of David; but, with this exception, the prophet stands alone as the bearer of it.

4. *Personal Details.*—In reading Ezekiel it is always to be borne in mind that he was distant in *space* from the scenes he describes, *e.g.* in ch. xxiv. he is bidden to name a particular day, which was found afterwards to be the very day when the siege of Jerusalem began, he being then in the land of his captivity by the river Chebar. In like manner, in ch. viii. he describes in detail the idolatrous abominations perpetrated in the temple at Jerusalem, which he is shown in vision, though far away. The latest date given in the book is the twenty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity, 527 B.C. (ch. xxix. 17). This is seventeen years later than the date of the first verse of the same chapter. The vision of the restored temple (ch. xl.) is dated in the 25th year.

We learn incidentally from ch. xxiv. 18 that Ezekiel was married, and that his wife died in the ninth year of his exile, 590 B.C.; also from iii. 24; viii. 1, that though in exile he nevertheless had a house of his own. Probably, therefore, the condition of the captives, at all events in certain cases, was not an oppressive one, but its bitterness consisted in expatriation from the land of their fathers, which was itself intolerable to the Jew with his highly developed and sensitive patriotic feelings. Of Ezekiel's later history nothing is known. There is every reason to believe that he died in exile, where it is evident that he was recognised as a prophet and held in honour by his fellow countrymen, as we see by the fact of the elders of the nation often assembling themselves to receive his prophetic counsels and admonitions. As these were by no means of chastened severity,

it is plain that his position was sufficiently well established to make it possible for them to be delivered without fear, and received without questioning or dispute (viii. 1; xiv. 1; xx. 1; xxxiii. 30).

No stress can be laid upon a tradition which has been preserved that he died a martyr, being put to death by one of the chief men of the Jewish people on account of his prophecies. Josephus, as we have seen, calls him a "boy" when he went into exile, but as his prophetic career does not seem to have extended over more than twenty-two years (xxix. 17), we must either suppose him to have died very young or must assume that the expression of Josephus is to be interpreted with considerable latitude.

It is not improbable that the call of Ezekiel to the prophetic office may have had some connection with the communication of Jeremiah's predictions to Babylon, which took place in the year preceding Ezekiel's visions (Jer. li. 59; cf. xxix. 21—28), if not in the way of cause and effect, at all events as taking up the note of warning and denunciation, and carrying on the message of prophecy. Ezekiel, however, does not mention Jeremiah, nor does Jeremiah mention Ezekiel.

The three prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, correspond generally to the prophets of the previous century, who flourished before and after the captivity of Israel, namely, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, but in every case the individuality is too strongly marked to make any closer relation possible. For instance, the silence of Ezekiel with regard to his personal history contrasts strongly with the diffuseness of Jeremiah in this respect, whose personal history is largely contained in his writings. This contrast of individual character is the more interesting, inasmuch as it shows that in selecting His human agents the Spirit of God does not obliterate individual characteristics.

5. *Canonicity.*—The genuineness of Ezekiel's writings has been little disputed. It is chiefly the last nine chapters, in themselves sufficiently perplexing and mysterious, that have been impugned, and they only by a few rash critics of no great name. The canonicity of the book is established by Jewish and Christian authorities. There is, indeed, no express reference to it or quotation from it in the New Testament, but the following passages apparently refer to it:—Rom. ii. 24, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written" (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 20—23): Rom. x. 5, Gal. iii. 12, "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." (See Lev. xviii. 5, and Ezek. xx. 11, 21, &c. Cf. also 1 Pet. iv. 17, Ezek. ix. 6;

and 2 Pet. iii. 4, Ezek. xii. 22.) It is obvious also that there is a general correspondence between parts of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse of St. John.

6. *Analysis and Contents.*—There are four main divisions of the book. 1. Chaps. i.—xxiv. chiefly directed against the Israelites and specially the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the only exception is the discourse against the Ammonites in chap. xxi. 28—32, or in the Heb. xxi. 33—37. There is often a date given of the year, month, and day, reckoning, as has been said, from Jehoiachin's captivity. In this section the people are reproached for their sins, idolatry, sun-worship, &c., which was carried on by the elders, especially Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan (viii. 11). Zedekiah is reproached with his Egyptian alliance (xvii. 15, &c.), which is so far evidence of Ezekiel's acceptance of Jeremiah's prophetic authority, who had consistently discouraged this alliance with Egypt. The prophet threatens him with captivity (ver. 20), as he had previously done with dying in the land without seeing it (xii. 13). In xxi. 25, he is also severely threatened and virtually deposed in language which is at once a distinct reference to the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10), and the basis of the angelic announcement (Luke i. 12—33). Chap. xx. is that which so mysteriously foretells the dispersion among "the wilderness of the peoples," not "people," as A.V.; a dispersion which had already begun in the prophet's own day, but which was to be continued for long ages till our own and our children's days possibly, to be followed (ver. 41) by some signal manifestation of divine action which should declare God's ways as plainly as the first return from captivity which was distinctly promised (vi. 8, 9; xxii. 16). Chap. xxi. represents the king of Babylon as hesitating whether to go up against Jerusalem or Rabbath first. He decides for the former (ver. 22), but the prophet assures the Ammonites that they shall not escape (ver. 28). This accounts for the apparent interruption of a series of prophecies otherwise directed wholly against Israel. Chap. xxii. declares the judgment of the "bloody city." Chap. xxiii. relates the idolatrous apostasy of Aholah, "her tent," and Aholibah-"my tent is in her," or of Israel (Samaria) and Judah (Jeru, salem), under the image of two women thus named. Chap. xxiv. contains the death of the prophet's wife.

This ends the first division of the book; the second includes chaps. xxv.—xxxii., which are chiefly prophecies against foreign nations, that in chap. xxv. against the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and Philistines is without date. Chaps. xxvi., xxvii. and xxviii. are against Tyre and Zidon, and are dated in the eleventh year. Chaps. xxix.—xxxii. are against Egypt and

Pathros, and dated in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth year, with the exception of xxix. 17, which is dated the twenty-seventh year, and is the latest in the whole book. It is probably inserted here for the sake of uniformity, and to bring together prophecies relating to the same subject. The prediction in verses 13—15 cannot be understood literally, but must be taken as showing that Egypt shall be dealt with somewhat after the analogy of Israel with a definite period of political extinction.

The third section extends from chap. xxxiii. to chap. xxxix. Chap. xxxiii. 1—20, declares the office of a watchman; chap. xxxiv. reproves the shepherds of Israel and promises to raise up one shepherd, even David. As it is utterly impossible that this could have been understood, or meant to be understood, literally, it is the more remarkable as a witness to the hope that still centred in the house of David and the more significant in relation to Christ. Chap. xxxv. relates to the ancient enmity of Edom, which broke out against Israel when the troubles of the Exile fell upon the nation, as is so often alluded to in Scripture, and threatens the desolation of the country. (Cf. xxv. 12—27; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Obadiah 10; Mal. i. 2, &c.) Chap. xxxvi. continues the promise of God's care for Israel with that of the new heart and the outpoured spirit. Chap. xxxvii. has the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones, and under the figure of the union of two sticks (ver. 16) is prophesied the restored union of Israel under one head, "my servant David." Chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix. are occupied with the promised overthrow of Gog and Magog. The latter name is found in Gen. x. 2; but Gog is only known elsewhere as the name of a Reubenite (1 Chron. v. 4). Both names are adopted by St. John (Rev. xx. 8).

We now come to the last division of Ezekiel's prophecies, the most obscure and enigmatical of all—his vision and description of the restored Temple (chap. xl.—xlviii.), about which certain facts must be borne in mind. First, it is perfectly certain that the details of this vision were not accepted as the basis of the restored Temple. It is quite certain that the Jews who returned must have been acquainted with Ezekiel's prophecies and with this portion of his book. It is no less certain that when the Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, he was guided by wholly different plans and directions, in fact that he followed the main features of Solomon's Temple, that original edifice which many of the returning captives still remembered.

This of itself is no slight evidence of the existence at that time of prescriptions and regulations which were then regarded as of higher authority even than Ezekiel's. It is hard to believe that the plans and directions which were followed in the building

of the second Temple were themselves of no more ancient origin, if those of Ezekiel's vision were set aside in favour of them. But, secondly, it is no less clear that the arrangements of Ezekiel's vision were physically impossible to be complied with. For instance, the boundaries of the city and Temple in the vision are quite different from what they were actually, and the Temple was outside the city. The Temple was several miles north of the city, and the city several miles north of the site of Jerusalem; the natural boundaries of the western sea and the Jordan were too narrow by several miles to allow of the assignment made for the Temple and the priests and Levites.

The portions of the tribes were arranged in total disregard of the allotments made by Joshua. Each tribe was to have a portion of equal width. The seven tribes of Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah, were to be on the right of the Temple and its precincts—"the oblation"; and the five others, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad on the south. The restoration of animal sacrifices is provided for in the ordinances of the Temple in the prophet's vision. The Ark of the Covenant is not mentioned, and there is no high priest; only the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles are named, not Pentecost nor the Great Day of Atonement; but a new feast is instituted on the first and ninth days of the first month, when a solemn purification for the sanctuary was to take place for those who had sinned through error (xlv. 20).

It is remarkable that Ezekiel speaks in this chapter of a new functionary, whom he calls the prince, *nasi*, to whom a large portion of land east and west of the oblation for the priests and Levites is assigned, and whose duty it is to provide the sacrifices. Here again it is only possible to interpret these features spiritually. In later times the head of the Sanhedrim who filled a very different office, was called by this name. The mediatorial function, which is assigned to this personage in the vision of Ezekiel, is very remarkable.

In the forty-seventh chapter we have the vision of the living waters which flowing eastwards from under the altar rapidly become an impassable stream, which flows into the Dead Sea and makes it sweet. This is manifestly the original of St. John's vision in the last chapter of the Revelation. It is to be observed that all the latter chapters of Ezekiel, whatever may be their interpretation, are only to be understood on one assumption, that, namely, of the restoration of the Temple and the reoccupation of the land. When we bear in mind that the latest date in Ezekiel's prophecies was some three years before the release of Jehoiachin from prison, this expression of confident hope is the

more remarkable, and is certain proof of the influence of Jeremiah's promise of the restoration. (Cf. Daniel ix. 2.)

Ezekiel's writings as a whole have probably commended themselves to a more limited circle of readers than those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, in consequence of the detailed accounts of his visions, which are at all times difficult to realise, but they nevertheless abound in passages of permanent and universal interest, and when regarded as a whole with reference to the time and conditions under which they were penned they fill a conspicuous and important part in the economy of revelation, and are of no inconsiderable value for the clear evidence they afford of the acquaintance with the law of Moses which the children of Israel must have carried with them into the land of their exile. (Cf. chs. xviii., xx., xxii. *e.g.*)

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

1. The Book of Daniel stands in the Hebrew canon among the Hagiographa or Sacred Writings, which are specially so called in distinction to the Law and the Prophets, not as implying any greater degree of sanctity, but as claiming an actual and independent sanctity for them, notwithstanding their position as third in the scale. In that canon the position of Daniel is after Esther and before Ezra. In the Septuagint and Vulgate, as also in Luther's version, its place is among the four greater prophets after Ezekiel, which is its natural chronological position, supposing Daniel to have been an historical character and this book a genuine production by him, for though Daniel's career began earlier than Ezekiel's, he no doubt long survived him, as he lived to witness the return of his countrymen in consequence of the edict of Cyrus, B.C. 536 (Dan. i. 21; x. i.).

It consists of twelve chapters, which are written partly in Hebrew and partly in that Aramaic dialect commonly called Chaldee, which the Jews seemed to have acquired, and more or less adopted, in the land of their captivity. The first six chapters relate matters of fact of a substantive nature; the last six contain various visions which were vouchsafed to Daniel. The former half is divided into several sections, loosely joined together without any formula of transition or even a connecting particle except between the first and second chapters. In fact, they form complete narratives in themselves, but they follow on in natural sequence, so that the former chapters are presupposed in the latter.

2. *Authenticity, Genuineness, and Integrity.*—This book has uniformly been ascribed to Daniel by the combined testimony of the Jewish and Christian Churches. In recent years, however, this judgment has been utterly reversed. As the issues depending upon it are very important, it is desirable to enter into this question at some length. There are three questions involved, (1) the authenticity, (2) the genuineness, and (3) the integrity

of the book. By its authenticity we mean its trustworthiness as a record of fact; by its genuineness, that it is rightly ascribed to its supposed author; and by its integrity, that it is an original whole, and not the casual combination of distinct and independent parts. It is important to point out that the questions of authenticity and genuineness are, to a large extent, interdependent; that is to say, if the book is authentic, it can hardly be other than genuine, and if it is genuine we may take it for granted that it is authentic.

If Daniel wrote this book we may well hesitate to question its details; and if its details are trustworthy, there is no one to whom we are so likely to be indebted for them as to Daniel—to his presiding supervision and care, if not to his personal authorship. It should also be clearly noted that in the historic credibility of the book, or, in other words, its authenticity, is inseparably bound up the due recognition of the miraculous. The stories of the deliverance of Daniel's companions from the fiery furnace and of himself from the den of lions, are such as to baffle all explanation to account for them. We are challenged by the writer on the most definite issue to determine whether they occurred as facts or did not occur. If they occurred as facts then they are miracles and can be nothing else; if they did not occur, then the story relating them must be a romance, a fiction, or a myth, and it can be nothing else. These stories, of all others in Scripture, the most resolutely refuse to yield to any process or theory which, accepting them as artistic sketches, with a moral and didactic purpose, nevertheless denies to them the weight of historic reality, and dissipates their substantial worth as actual occurrences.

The Book of Daniel, therefore, offers a crucial test on many points which are directly or implicitly denied in the present day. Nor must we imagine that it is only in the present day that the severity of this test is felt. There never can have been a time when it was really more easy to believe the story of the deliverance from the fiery furnace than it is now, if the imagination truly grappled with it; but when the truth of Daniel was first impugned, it was rather on the prophetic than the historic ground. Porphyry, who died A.D. 304, wrote fifteen books against the religion of Christ, and the whole of his twelfth book was taken up with an attack on the genuineness of Daniel. He maintained that it was written by a Jew in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and for this reason it seemed to predict truly up to this point, but falsely afterwards. The Book of Daniel, then, raises a definite issue on the subject of miracles and prophecy; if it is genuine it is absolutely impossible to refuse to

acknowledge either; and for this reason it is easy to see that a disposition to reject either may well tend to a prejudgment of the genuineness or authenticity of Daniel, not on the actual merits of the question, but in accordance with preconceived opinions upon miracles and prophecy.

3. *Canonicity.*—Our business, however, is with the grounds upon which Daniel has been accepted as canonical and believed as an integral part of the Holy Scripture. And these are two-fold: (*a*), external; (*b*), internal.

(i.) It must be admitted that externally the Book of Daniel comes to us as well authenticated as any other canonical book. First, there is the reference in the first Book of Maccabees, ii. 59, 60, "Ananias, Azarias, and Misael by believing were saved out of the flame; Daniel for his innocency was delivered from the mouths of lions." This is mentioned in conjunction with David and Elias, and it is evidently regarded as of the same character and authority as what is related of them. It is true, of course, that the speech in which it occurs may be an imaginary one of the writer's, which he has put into the mouth of the dying Mattathias, but at all events we must regard it as one which he might have spoken.

At this time, therefore, the historian saw nothing improbable in Mattathias being acquainted with the history of Daniel, and as we have no history in which these events are recorded but this Book of Daniel, he must have learnt them from it, and at any rate proof is afforded that when the book of Maccabees was written the canonical position of Daniel was secure. Now the first Book of Maccabees was probably written in the last quarter of the second century before Christ, that is to say, about two generations after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. It follows therefore that, if Daniel was a late production, it had managed to work its way into reception on a level with the rest of Scripture in the short space of sixty or seventy years. This is by no means likely, as the first Book of Maccabees itself was not so received, nor is there any reason to believe that any other book of the same period was allowed a place in the canon.

(ii.) Again, this first Book of Maccabees not only presupposes the existence of Daniel, which it does merely as a matter of independent testimony, just as Milton's allusion to Shakespeare proves that he lived after Shakespeare's time, but it displays acquaintance also with the Alexandrian version of the book, so that the Semitic original must have been in existence long enough to find a place in an authorised translation like that of the LXX.; *e.g.* in 1 Macc. i. 54 we read that "they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar," meaning no doubt the

heathen idol, and quoting the remarkable words of Dan. xi. 31, as they are in the Greek (cf. Dan. ix. 27). So in 1 Macc. ix 40, the words καὶ ἔπεσον τραυματίαι πολλοί are an echo of the Greek of Dan. xi. 26, καὶ πεσοῦνται τραυματίαι πολλοί, and in 1 Macc. ix. 27 there is close correspondence with the language of Dan. xii. 1. It seems, therefore, fairly certain that the writer of the first Book of Maccabees was acquainted with the Greek version of Daniel, which necessitates an earlier existence of the book than the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, even if the Septuagint version itself is not of earlier date than that.

(iii.) The narrative in Josephus (Ant. xi. 8, 5), that when Alexander the Great in his conquering march came to Jerusalem, the Book of Daniel was shown to him, and that he took to himself the prophecy in it that a Greek should destroy the Persian empire, and was much pleased therewith, is clear proof that in the opinion of Josephus the book was in existence then, whether or not we accept the story, while it shows that he could have known of no incident or tradition which made its existence then impossible. As a matter of historical fact, however, it is true that Alexander treated the Jews with marked favour, which gives some colour of probability to the story of Josephus, and itself must be accounted for by some predisposing cause such as this would have furnished.

(iv.) Lastly, had Daniel first appeared in Maccabean times, as the natural product of them, there would probably have been other books of a like kind, but we have no evidence of any, and therefore this book must stand entirely alone if not genuine, and however appropriate certain portions may be to the requirements of that time, it is hard to see the special bearing of others upon them, and therefore the theory of Maccabean origin, while it affords a plausible motive for some parts, offers no explanation of others which are equally characteristic, any more than it explains why the one part should have been linked so closely with the other, if it was not a whole from the beginning.

It is important to estimate these positive and substantive facts at their true value, because they seem to furnish definite material, which it is alike impossible to set aside and to reconcile with any theory of the late origin of Daniel. However we are to deal with the miraculous and prophetic elements of the book, it is at all events not fair to minimise the value of these facts in order to depreciate the ostensible importance of the miracles and prophecies contained in it. If we are honest and earnest students, therefore, we cannot ignore the fact that the external testimony, direct and indirect, to the existence of Daniel at a time antece-

dent to the age of Antiochus Epiphanes is very strong. It would certainly be held to be conclusive in the absence af any motives for setting it aside.

(v.) Another point deserves to be more carefuly noted than it seems commonly to have been. We have in the prophet Ezekiel distinct reference to the existence of the prophet Daniel in his time. In the fourteenth chapter he twice couples him with Noah and Job, as a notable instance of deliverance, and in chap. xxviii. 3, he says of Tyre, "Behold thou art wiser than Daniel, there is no secret that they can hide from thee." Ezekiel and Daniel were contemporaries. It is plain that Ezekiel knew of Daniel as one who had either wrought some great deliverance for others, or had been himself the subject of it, and also as of one who was a great revealer of secrets. Now we may not assume that Ezekiel was acquainted with the Book of Daniel, but as these are the only two references we have to Daniel in the Hebrew literature, we must either assume, if the book was late in date, that it was a story based entirely on these two meagre and fragmentary references to the history of Daniel, which were consequently sufficient to supply the foundation and framework of it, or else that more extensive traditions sufficient for supplying it were in existence, and had survived in adequate measure for the space of three centuries and a half till they suggested the remarkable compilation which we now know as the Book of Daniel.

It seems to me that this is a point that is well worthy of note, and we may be absolutely certain that the writer of Daniel in the second century before Christ either fabricated his romance entirely out of the materials supplied by Ezekiel, or else made use of traditions of which there is no trace elsewhere, or else gave the rein to his imagination to create a story in substantial agreement with the brief allusions to Daniel in Ezekiel. I do not believe that any of these courses was probable or possible, nor do I believe that the whole compass of literature supplies any case corresponding to what this would have been. The fact that certain stories, such as that of Bel and the Dragon, and of Susanna, became attached to the Book of Daniel, but did not find a place in the Hebrew canon, serves at least to show that there was felt to be an intrinsic difference between them, whether it was that of age or anything else, and neither of these stories can have originated in the way it is assumed that the Book of Daniel arose from a desire to encourage the Jews when suffering under the severities of the Antiochian persecution, though indeed it is useless to speculate as to what may or may not have been the possible origin of any book whose apparent and traditional origin is disputed.

4. *Arguments on the Other Side.*—The arguments which are advanced against the genuineness of the Book of Daniel are as follows:

(i.) The fact that its place in the Hebrew canon is not among the Prophets but in the so-called Sacred Writings, is advanced to show that the book was not known when the division was made which consisted of the writings of the Prophets. This may possibly have been made by Ezra or Nehemiah somewhere about 450 B.C., or more than one hundred years after the age of Daniel. In the Septuagint version, however, which was probably made in the third century B.C., Daniel follows Ezekiel as he does in our own version. And it is a very reasonable explanation of the place of Daniel in the Hebrew canon, that he was not officially a prophet with a distinct call, as is recorded in the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but only a prophet in virtue of his gifts. His book is regarded rather as an historical treatise, and therefore is classed with those of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. In like manner, though Daniel was pre-eminently a prophet and acknowledged as a prophet, he is not classed among the prophets in the canon, but is placed in the forefront of the "Sacred Writings." I think it is obvious that these two considerations entirely neutralise any impression arising from the position of Daniel in the Hebrew canon, and fully account for it.

(ii.) A second reason is conceived to exist in the silence of Jesus the son of Sirach, in Ecclus. xlix., when the worthies of Israel are enumerated. The entire passage extends from chap. xliv. to chap. l. Daniel, however, is not the only name omitted; no mention is made of Esther or of Mordecai, whereas Nehemiah finds his place somewhat inappropriately between Zerubbabel and Enoch. It is manifest that no valid argument can be raised on this circumstance, seeing that the entire catalogue is of a rhetorical character, and the selection made on arbitrary principles. The date of Ecclus. is probably about 180—200. If, therefore, Daniel was of the age suggested, and not genuine, this would of course account for the silence of the son of Sirach, though of course it may very well arise from other causes. Clearly, if we are right in assigning the LXX. translation to the third century B.C., the place of Daniel in that version is alone conclusive as furnishing positive evidence to his existence in opposition to the negative evidence deduced from the silence of the son of Sirach.

And it must always be remembered that Ezekiel was manifestly acquainted with a Daniel, whether or not the book bearing his name has a right to be received as genuine. Indeed, as I have already stated, the reference made by Ezekiel is altogether inexplicable, if the Book of Daniel is a forgery of the second

century B.C. Who was the Daniel to whom Ezekiel refers? and how is it that being so eminent as he clearly was we know nothing whatever about him? If he was held worthy of being classed with Noah and Job, how is it that tradition was absolutely silent as to his history for some four centuries, till it suddenly blazed forth in the age of Antiochus Epiphanes with this profusion of supernatural incident and enigmatical prediction?

(iii.) Thirdly, it is said that there is no mention of Daniel in Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi. But why is it necessary to suppose there should have been, considering the specific character of these writers and the brevity of their writings? There is no mention of Ezekiel in Jeremiah, or of Jeremiah in Ezekiel, though they were contemporary. To all appearance, however, this negative feature is more than neutralised by what is probably a verbal reference to Daniel in Nehemiah. The words of Nehemiah (i. 5) are a reproduction of Daniel (ix. 4), and the peculiar phrase, "great and terrible God," is used only in Deuteronomy and in this place of Daniel. The position in which Nehemiah found himself was not unlike that of Daniel, and so far calculated to bring to his recollection the words of Daniel. In Nehemiah ix. 32, we see also that Nehemiah has adopted an alteration of Deut. vii. 9, which Daniel has made in ix. 4. If in the former instance we might question which of the two was the original, there is hardly the same opportunity of doing so here, where we seem to have the result of a longer and wider experience. It is, moreover, at least probable that two of Zechariah's visions are more or less adapted and borrowed from Daniel (Zech. i. 18—21; vi. 1—5), and if this is so, we have quite as much indication of acquaintance with Daniel in the post-Captivity prophets as we can reasonably expect. Indeed, the visions of Zechariah may very well be thought to lean upon those of Ezekiel and Daniel.

It has even been suggested that the frequent asseverations of truth are blinds to conceal a consciousness of falsehood on the part of the writer. This only shows the perversity of the spirit of the objector, just as, in certain chapters of Isaiah, we are asked to believe them not genuine because they do not claim to be his; whereas in chapters like the thirteenth and fourteenth, which do claim to be his, the authority of the superscription is without scruple set aside. Doubtless, had there been no vouchers for truthfulness in Daniel, that would have been advanced as an indication of spuriousness, just as the frequency of them is construed into a tacit admission of forgery. So just and appropriate is our Lord's remark: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the market-place and

crying unto their fellows: We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." So difficult is it to conceive the circumstances in which the excuse for objection should not arise.

It is to be remembered that, with regard to the Book of Daniel, the question as to its date lies only between the actual date, which we may suppose to be that of the old age of Daniel, or about the middle of the sixth century B.C., and that of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (163 B.C.), a distance of more than three centuries and a half. No other date has ever been suggested; but it is not hard to see that, even conceding the latter date as the true one, there is a distinct prophecy as early as the second chapter, which probably reappears afterwards, that renders absolutely futile any such hypothesis, for it is not possible to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream without perceiving that the rise of the Christian Church as a kingdom that should last for ever is definitely promised therein.

Of course, in the case of any prophecy, no matter how close its correspondence with what purports to be its fulfilment, it is always possible, on *a priori* grounds, to affirm that the fulfilment does not establish the prophecy, because we cannot be certain that it was so fulfilled. The correspondence may be fortuitous, but for all that there is a natural inability in the human mind to reject the inference which forces itself on us in consequence of any such correspondence, especially when repeated again and again. An aggregate of threads, each of which may be weak in itself, is yet strong enough to hold the mind enchained; and there can be no doubt that prophecy may not only be regarded as one of such threads, but also that this particular prophecy is really one of the strongest of them; and though it may be unwise to dwell with too great exclusiveness even on this indication of antecedent design, it is equally unwise to shut our eyes altogether to the cogency of it.

The Book of Daniel, like that of Ezra, is written partly in Hebrew and partly, as already stated, in the Aramaic dialect, commonly called Chaldee. Some have affirmed that the Chaldee of Daniel is a disguised imitation of that of Ezra; but sufficient linguistic differences have been pointed out to negative this assumption. These differences are, indeed, slight, and the Chaldee of Ezra and Daniel is more nearly alike than that of either is to the language of the oldest of the Chaldee Targums. There is reason to believe that neither the Hebrew nor the Chaldee of Daniel was in use in the time of the Maccabees, and hence the notion of a Maccabean origin for the Book of Daniel is rendered the more improbable.

5. *Analysis.*—In attempting to analyse the Book of Daniel, it is as difficult to discover on what principle the transition from the Hebrew to the Chaldee is made, as it is to decide why the narrative passes from the third person to the first. The book opens in Hebrew, and passes on to Chaldee at chap. ii. 4, but at chap. viii. 1, it reverts to Hebrew, which is maintained to the end of the book. On the other hand, the third person is uniformly adopted in the first six chapters and the first verse of chap. vii., when the narrative is continued in the first person and maintained throughout, except at viii. 1, and x. 1, where both forms may be said to be combined: "a vision appeared unto me, Daniel . . . and I saw;" "a thing was revealed unto Daniel . . . in those days I Daniel." It is to be observed from this fact that the two parts are the more closely welded together, inasmuch as the use of the two languages and the two moods of narration characterise both parts, regarding the end of chap. vi. as the most natural and obvious division.

The first division contains Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and the interpretations of them, and the narrative of the deliverance of Daniel and his companions in a miraculous manner; but the second part of the book is almost exclusively occupied with an account of the visions vouchsafed to Daniel. In the eleventh chapter these take the form of a communication made to him by an angel, who relates in detail, as it seems, the history of the Seleucian kings. There can be no doubt that this, in any aspect, is one of the most remarkable chapters of Scripture. If the book is not genuine, this chapter is the most audacious of forgeries; but if genuine, it can only be regarded as the most extraordinary of prophecies—in fact, it may claim to be altogether unique; and yet we can only, on the most arbitrary principles, venture to regard this chapter as an interpolation, and suppose that it warrants us in calling in question the integrity of the book. It is absolutely impossible to sever this chapter from its surroundings; it must stand or fall with the rest of the book.

To any one who is at all open to belief, the question of the genuineness of Daniel is decided by the fact that there are two prophecies in the book which no hypothesis of its late origin can at all account for: these are the prophecies of the fifth empire and that of the seventy weeks. If there is any meaning at all in ii. 44, vii. 27, it can only be the promise of a vast and permanent spiritual kingdom, such as that which claims to have been founded by Christ. It is, humanly speaking, as unlikely that this should have been foreseen in the second century as in the sixth before Christ; and still more unlikely is it that a

person writing in the second century before Christ the kind of imaginary fiction this book would have been, should have framed so lofty a conception as this, and have put it into the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, and have asserted it so confidently.

And the same may be said of the prophecy of the seventy weeks. This is absolutely unintelligible on the supposition of its late origin; whereas if it is part, as it professes to be, of a divine vision, it is not only susceptible of a marvellously minute interpretation, but seems to have furnished the only conceivable basis upon which our Lord declared, when He commenced His ministry, that the time was fulfilled; for in the whole compass of Scripture there is nothing to show that the Messianic hopes and promises were to be fulfilled in the age of Christ—who claimed to have fulfilled them—more than at any other time, and yet we have independent evidence that, at that time, there was a very general impression that they were then to be fulfilled.

It is for these reasons, then, that we regard the Book of Daniel as a genuine work of the age of Daniel, and as coming to us with his authority and sanction. And as such it sets the coping-stone to the edifice of the sacred Scriptures, as a monument of divine revelation; for though in Psalm and Prophecy we have many indications of a presiding divine mind, as we have in sacred history of a divine providence, yet nowhere, as in the Book of Daniel, have we the definite and bold assertion of a claim to declare beforehand the events of the hidden future—the distinct and unfaltering challenge on the part of the historian to have triumphed over the ordinary laws of nature; to have "stopped the mouths of lions and quenched the violence of fire."

HOSEA.

1. *Position in the Canon.*—The first place in the collection of shorter prophecies, commonly called The Minor Prophets, is assigned to Hosea both in the Hebrew and in the Greek canon. The cause of this arrangement may have been the occurrence in i. 2 of the phrase, "The beginning of the word of the Lord." Or it may have been the character of the work as the one great prophetic production of the northern kingdom. Possibly there was no more abstruse reason than that it was the longest of the earlier books in the group. The very earliest it could hardly be, for putting aside the claims of Jonah and Joel, which are open to question, we have only to compare the contents of Amos to perceive that the period mirrored in it is antecedent to that pictured in the pages of Hosea. These two prophets were indeed closely related, and the work of the one throws light on that of the other. As Elijah and Elisha stand out against the dark background of the downfall of the dynasty of Omri, in like manner Amos and Hosea presage the overthrow of the royal house of Jehu and the destruction of the kingdom of Ephraim, and at once interpret the purpose of Jehovah and vindicate His character in the final catastrophe.

2. *Career of the Prophet.*—Of the prophet's person and career we know little, for he is not mentioned in the historical books of the Bible, and not much can be gathered from his own writing. His name is identical with that of the last king of Samaria (2 Kings xv. 30), and also with the earlier name of Israel's great leader in the conquest of Canaan (Numbers xiii. 16). His father Beeri has been mistakenly identified with Beerah (1 Chron. v. 6), and gratuitously credited with the authorship of Isaiah viii. 19, 20. There are other traditional statements concerning our prophet, but they contradict one another, and have no authority.

Enough may be gathered from the style and spirit of Hosea's book to construct a vivid and very individualistic portrait of the man and of the seer. If an interpretation of chapters i.—iii.

which of late years has gained the support of the highest scholarship and the finest critical discernment of our time may be accepted, then we have the veil drawn aside from a pathetic story of domestic trial, that discloses the origin of what is deepest and most original in the message of the prophet, and gives us the key to his peculiar place in the orderly progress of revelation.

A difficult reference in ix. 7, 8, suggests that, as might have been surely inferred, Hosea was exposed to the most maddening opposition and obduracy, if not also to treacherous and perilous attack. The same passage, in combination with the denunciations of priest and prophet (iv. 4, 5, &c.), seems to point to the official religious orders as the standing antagonists of the prophet and of his doctrine. It is commonly assumed that he was a layman, and like Amos no member of a prophetic guild, but called by a personal divine impulse to his public work. This is probably correct, though it has been urged with some ingenuity that the prominence given to the priesthood in his utterances, his interest in worship, his knowledge of ritual, law, and history, mark him out as himself a member of the priestly caste, and thus explain the allusion to "hatred in the house of his God" (ix. 8).

The idea which used to prevail in certain quarters, that, though his mission was mainly to the northern nation, the man was himself a citizen of the southern kingdom, has been practically abandoned. It remains possible, and to some extent his references to Judah support the notion, that towards the end of his career he was driven by persecution to forsake Ephraim, and to take up his abode in Judæa, where he put together the record of his prophetic activity. That he was beyond all question by birth, breeding, life, and sympathy a native of the north is evidenced by his intimate and easy familiarity with its geography, recent history, social condition, and minute local circumstances and characteristics. There is, indeed, in the testimony of the Judæan Amos a wonderful accuracy and detail of acquaintance with the northern realm. But it is not equal to that of Hosea, and there is a difference of kind. The one knows about the affairs of Ephraim. The other is at home in its life, bound up in its sorrows, sins, and ruin, personally burdened with its guilt, agonising in its death-throes, and in every note of its funeral dirge feeling its fate as his own.

3. *Date and Contemporary Events.*—There is a twofold indication of date prefixed to the Book of Hosea. First, it is stated, in terms of the Judæan monarchy, that the word of the Lord came to him "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Second, in terms of the northern mon-

archy, it is said to have been "in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel," that is of course Jeroboam II., the greatest and most statesmanlike of Israel's kings. These are manifestly distinct headings, and not parallel designations of the same period. For it is certain that Jeroboam was dead some years before the end of Uzziah's reign, and while the reference to the northern monarch terminates about the middle of the eighth century, the Judæan date carries us down to its close.

The chronology of the age is extremely uncertain, and even with the aid of the Assyrian inscriptions scholars have succeeded in fixing no more than a few events in it with precision. What the double date of the superscription does enable us to say with approximate certainty is, that Hosea's earliest prophecies fell in the closing years of Jeroboam, and therefore in all likelihood before B.C. 750. As for the rest, the lengthy list of Judæan kings does not necessarily imply that there are in the book oracles belonging to each and all of these reigns. The heading is a large and general one, indicating the prophet's epoch. Probably it was a technical designation of that splendid age of prophetic activity which corresponded with the slow and momentous advance of the Assyrian power. It is noteworthy that we find it attached to the Book of Isaiah, which heads the series of the prophets proper in the Old Testament canon, and with the omission of Uzziah it also introduces the work of his younger contemporary, Micah. In the case of Hosea its scope is plainly limited by the fall of Samaria, which took place about the commencement of Hezekiah's reign.

We may, therefore, roughly locate the activity of Hosea in the two middle quarters of the eight century. In this period the first half formed a striking contrast to the last. Through the prowess and ability of Jeroboam, taking advantage of Assyria's persistent pressure on Syria, the ancient enemy of Samaria, Israel had recovered much of its former importance, and was enjoying great prosperity. This good fortune was of course fallacious, for Assyria's conquest of Damascus meant the clearance of its way to Samaria and the rich coast towns and provinces of Palestine. Moreover, wealth and success had not bettered the moral and spiritual condition of Ephraim, but rather were breeding in the commonwealth a host of lawless ambitions, evil passions, and demoralising forces, such as have so often caused a strong military despotism to be followed by anarchy and sudden decay. It was so in Israel. With the death of Jeroboam, his empire was rent and wasted by the struggles of military adventurers, the conspiracies of rival factions, and the hatreds of internecine feuds, complicated by foreign intrigues with the great

rival empires of Egypt and Assyria. His son Zechariah, after a brief reign of six months, was dethroned and slain by Shallum, who within a month was massacred by Menahem. With the aid of Assyria Menahem held the throne for some years, but his son Pekahiah in two years was murdered by Pekah, and he in turn was slain by Hoshea, the last king of Samaria. The period was one of frightful violence and confusion; all ties of social life were loosened; immorality, irreligion, superstition, panic, and despair contributed to the common misery and ruin; it hardly needed prophetic insight to foresee the inevitable end in the total dissolution of the state.

Corresponding to this change of character in the national condition and fortunes, there is a sharply defined distinction between the opening chapters (i.—iii.) of Hosea and the remainder (iv.—xiv.) of the book. The first part belongs to the earlier period of prosperity, for it pictures national plenty and rejoicing (ii. 5, 8, 13), and only threatens famine and disaster. The people are accused of infidelity to Jehovah and of attendant immorality, but not of such moral disintegration as marked later times. Moreover, the throne is still occupied by the dynasty of Jehu (i. 4).

With equal decisiveness we have in the second part the atmosphere of the dark and distracted age that followed the decease of Jeroboam (iv. 1, 2; v. 1, 2, 13; vii. 7, 11, &c.). Everywhere we are confronted with the lawlessness, the dissoluteness, the plotting factions, the mad dallying with the great powers, and a thousand unmistakable indications of the last years of Israel's decline and decay. But, while there can be no hesitation in assigning the whole of this section to the period in question, it is almost a hopeless task to divide it into separate utterances, and to attach these to particular stages of the downward career of the kingdom. This difficulty is due partly to the peculiar style adopted by the prophet, whose utterances flow on in one long, impassioned monologue, in which we rather dimly divine pauses than clearly discern them. Moreover, the references to contemporary incidents and current circumstances, though numerous and detailed, are too vague to help us much in our extreme ignorance of the actual course of events, which are chronicled in the most summary fashion in the historical books.

The following identifications have been proposed, but are none of them proved. The phrase, "Now shall a mouth devour them" (v. 7) refers to Shallum; "All their kings are fallen" (vii. 7) to Menahem, as also viii. 4 and 9—10, on account of his relations with Assyria (2 Kings xv. 19); while the mention of Shalman (x. 14) is held to indicate the reign of Hoshea. This last would

be very important, if we could be certain that Shalmaneser IV. is meant, but it might equally well be Shalmaneser III., or a King Salamanu of Moab, whose name occurs in an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser. Moreover, did the book cover so late a period, should we not find some trace in it of the remarkable movement which so stirred Isaiah, when Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria attacked Judæa, and tempted Ahaz to call in the aid of Assyria? Would the references in v. 1, vi. 8, xii. 11, be possible, after the devastation of Gilead and Naphtali by Tiglath-Pileser, which was the consequence? On the contrary, throughout the book Assyria appears not as a cruel destroyer (except in prediction of the future), but rather as a formidable power, whose alliance is foolishly courted by selfish factions in Israel. As this attitude is maintained even to the end (xiv. 3), it is urged with much probability, that the period actually reflected in Hosea's utterances does not extend much or at all beyond the times of Menahem.

4. *The Basis of the Prophet's Teaching.*—The characteristic feature of Hosea's book is his representation of his relation between God and the chosen people in terms of the marriage tie. Jehovah is the nation's husband, and Israel His unfaithful spouse. The choice of the figure is remarkable, and still more startling the use that is made of it. The idea of a conjugal union between a god and the land or people belonging to him was, indeed, a commonplace of Semitic religions. And it had its natural sequel in the encouragement of gross sexual abuses as a regular accompaniment of the established worship. The very evil that was blighting Ephraim in Hosea's age was the introduction of this physical conception, with its vile abuses, into the cult of Jehovah. Yet it is precisely this notion that the prophet takes and makes the basis of his entire polemic against the prevalent ills of the time, and the keynote of his teaching concerning God and His purposes with His people.

How came Hosea to a thought of such bold and original creativeness? He tells us that it grew out of a personal experience of a very remarkable character. By Divine direction he formed relations either of marriage or concubinage with one or possibly two women of dissolute life, had children, assigned to these significant names, and was taught thus to discern the meaning and drift of Jehovah's ways with His faithless people.

Taken in this bare and probably inexact reading, the story is so repulsive that a majority of interpreters have always refused to count it an actual transaction, and have relegated it to the category of symbolical action, allegory, or objective vision—whatever that may mean. But what would be foul in fact does

not become clean in symbol, vision, or fancy, and so in neither case would the supposed transaction have been possessed of much edifying efficacy. Moreover, if acted in dumb show, or simply told as a parable, it would not have had any specially impressive power on the minds of spectators or hearers, while as an actual experience in the prophet's home, its movement would be too slow and its scenes too removed from public view to tell on the conscience of the community.

Evidently its purpose was not the instruction of the people, but the making of the prophet. What the painful tragedy could accomplish as nothing else could, was to penetrate the prophet's own life, and thought, and spirit, with an analogical but intensely vivid realisation of the heart and mind of God in His dealing with wayward Israel. And for that, we cannot but conclude, it must have been an experience actually lived through—not, however, in relations of baseness, but necessarily in a sphere of pure and honourable love, hope, and aspiration. That it was an actual episode in the prophet's fortunes is confirmed by the fact that while the children's names are manifestly symbolical, the wife's name is as certainly real and not imaginative.

While we have but to bring to the story an intelligent knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of Hebrew narration and the methods of Divine revelation to get rid of a number of unhappy assumptions, and to find, in place of a history that, whether allegory or actuality, was alike repellent and spiritless, a pure and pathetic tale of suffering and loyal love, which might well make a high-tuned heart sensitive to the Divine tenderness, and stir a brave-souled patriot to the career of a prophet.

Hosea was a citizen of northern Israel, in whom burned the zeal of Elijah for Jehovah. The persistent sinning of his people pained him and perplexed him with questions concerning God and providence in the past, present, and future. At last light broke on him from a strange quarter, and yet certainly from heaven. It was "the beginning of God's word" to him, and through him to Israel. By Divine guidance, under the impulse of a warm attachment, he married, counting on a pure and happy domestic life. But his wife, contaminated by the religious taint of the time, proved unfaithful. He forbore with her, and hoped for amendment. Children were born and, by Divine direction, called by names significant of Israel's disloyalty to her God.

The truth was penetrating Hosea's whole being, that in him and his faithless spouse God was exhibiting types of Himself and wayward Israel. At length, by Hosea's act or her own, the unhappy wife ceased to be an inmate of his home, a partaker of

his care and shelter. She fell into a condition of slavery and misery. The old love was not gone from Hosea's heart. The thing was almost beyond the humanly possible, but a voice within him said, "Go, love her still, and by firm and tender handling win her back to purity."

It was the voice of God. Nay, it was the spirit of Jehovah in Hosea reproducing the feeling, thought, and action of God in His treatment of Israel. The prophet's first ardent attachment, his pain and grief under his wrongs, his loathing of the sin, his jealous indignation, his relenting, and patience, and forbearance, the loving sternness of discipline, the clinging affection that followed the unhappy outcast, the compassion for her in her degradation, the more than human loyalty of love and strength of goodness that recovered and redeemed her—these emotions, and conflicts, and experiences in Hosea are echoes and expressions of the very heart of God. This is the secret of Jehovah and of His providential leading of His people.

5. *Conception of Jehovah.*—Armed with this understanding of Hosea's ruling thought, we have a clue, if not to the logical order of the somewhat intricate maze of his monologue, at least to its emotional unity and its spiritual contents. Jehovah is a being, not of mere natural energies and physical bountifulness, but He is a God of moral forces, of justice, truth, and love. Fellowship with Him must live and move in these attributes, or it cannot be at all. A social order that is unrighteous, a religious worship that is immoral, a national existence based on earthly guarantees, may call themselves by Jehovah's name, but in truth they are a deflection from His fellowship, a defiance of His authority, and an outrage on His love. The local Baals, at whose shrines Israel sacrifices and feasts, with practices and beliefs contaminated by Canaanitish paganism and impurity; the gold-plated calves, that are adored as the embodiment of Israel's god, till the worshippers have forgotten that He is moral and not material; these are not Israel's true Divine husband, but usurpers of His place and of His rights. They are in fact and in practice other gods, and indeed no gods at all, while their cult is a profanation and an infidelity perpetrated in the face of the living God.

A twin act of desertion and unfaithfulness is the separate national existence of the northern kingdom, perpetuating as it does an ill-omened schism cleft in the unity of Jehovah's chosen people, and cursed by the instability of government, the lawlessness and violence, and the lack of moral and religious stamina which are the inevitable weaknesses of a community founded on revolt, held together by material interests only, and not rooted

in a sure and clearly discerned purpose of providence. An aggravation of this fundamental falseness, and a consequence of it, is Israel's ambition to mingle with the nations, to covet wealth and military might, and to seek support in its extremity from the great world powers rather than from its God.

The immediate harvest of its disloyalty to Jehovah is a universal relaxation of morality, the decay of all truth, and mercy, and purity, a creeping canker of selfishness and heartlessness, and the steady disintegration of all those virtues that make the happiness and strength of a nation. Hope of immediate amendment Hosea has none. The religious guides, the prophets and priests, the national leaders, the judges and rulers, are all involved in the universal corruption—are, indeed, its source. There is no knowledge of God in the land. Nevertheless, God's love of His people cannot be defeated, though its kindness may be thwarted and delayed. By calamity, famine, conquest, and exile He will prove to them the impotence of their false gods and allies. In their loneliness and misery He will speak to them, wake old memories in their breast, stir their souls to more spiritual desires, woo them back to their former love, and wed them to Himself again "in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies." They shall abjure their idols, and carnal worship, and earthly trusts, and secular ambitions (xiv. 2, 3). They shall "seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."

6. *Style.*—Hosea is the Cassandra of the northern kingdom. He pours out his lamentations over prevalent evils rather to unburden a surcharged grief than with any hope of mending them. He proclaims the approach of doom with no thought of averting it, and it is as it were only from the necessity of his own soul to seek escape from the overpowering gloom of the surrounding darkness, that after a long dirge of woes he suddenly breaks away, and expatiates on the light of the Divine restoration that must dawn when the night of sorrows is done. His style is fresh, poetical, nervous, but often enigmatical and difficult, rather from a superabundance of thought and meaning than from poverty of expression or obscurity of conception. His language is tumultuous with emotion, teeming with images that crowd one another uncompleted onwards, swinging to and fro between the opposite poles of anger and compassion, upbraiding and appeal, disdaining constantly the elaborate exposition of logic, and fusing its links of argument in the impassioned utterance of the heart.

In like manner, while his teaching marks a decisive advance

in defining and securing the contents of the true religion of Jehovah, his theology is a theology of the heart more than of the head. His expression of the tie between God and Israel in the imagery of the noblest human love, that has in its heart all justice, and purity, and truth, emancipates for ever the conception of religion from all elements that are not moral and spiritual, and flings about it and its subject the glow and warmth of ethical life and love. The conceptions of his predecessor, Amos, may indeed have more breadth, but they lack the depth and intensity of Hosea's realisation of God's heart in relation to His people. It is the spirit of Hosea's emotional piety that is echoed in much of the finest of later prophecy, and that breathes in the devotional grandeur of the Psalms. And in the New Testament, besides the numerous direct quotations of his words (Matt. ii. 15; ix. 13; xii. 7, &c.), the central thought of Hosea is taken up by our Lord Himself, and becomes the chosen image of the union of fidelity, and sacrifice, and undying love between Himself and His mystic bride, the Church.

JOEL.

1. *Character and Author.*—The arrangement of the minor prophets in the Hebrew Canon, and in the earliest of the versions, the Greek Septuagint, is the same for the last six, but differs considerably in respect of the earlier ones. The respective orders are as follows:—

HEBREW.—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah.

SEPTUAGINT.—Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah.

It is evident that in both the relative position of Hosea, Amos, Micah is identical, while the discrepancy arises in connection with the points where Joel, Obadiah, Jonah are introduced. These three books lack any indication of date in their superscriptions, and apparently at an early period canonical editors, thrown back on internal evidence, arrived at diverse conclusions. It is even probable that, while the great groups of the collection are placed chronologically (*i.e.* Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian), the position of individual books has been determined by considerations of a more literary character, such as affinities of thought, theme, or even phraseology. Therefore the canonical rank of Joel does no more than tell us that he was reckoned to belong to the early period of prophecy.

The title of the book adds little to our information. The prophet's name means *Jehovah is God.* He was the son of Pethuel, but of his birthplace and condition in life we are told nothing. That he prophesied, wrote, and published his memoir in Jerusalem seems certain (ii. 15—17, &c.). From the prominence which the Temple and its functionaries and ritual have in his oracle it has been conjectured that he belonged to the priestly order. The guess is neither proved nor disproved by the manner of his references to the priests (i. 9, 13; ii. 17). As to the time when he lived and worked there is no definite statement either in the title or in the body of the book. The date must be purely a matter of inference from its general character and contents.

2. *Scope of the Prophecy.*—The situation pictured in the prophecy is the following. The land has been devastated by successive swarms of locusts. A still more terrible visitation is impending. In the intervening pause the prophet appears. With graphic strokes he depicts the bygone disasters, describing them as Divine judgments on the land, and urging the people to repentance (i.). He proceeds to paint in still darker tints the more awful vengeance of Heaven that is approaching, and passes over into an overpowering appeal for penitence and instant prayer to God for mercy (ii. 1—17). This first intervention having proved successful, the prophet presents himself to the contrite congregation, and pours forth a comforting reassurance of God's present pity and future grace (ii. 18—32), and concludes with a majestic picture of the consummation of judgment and triumphant establishment of God's kingdom on earth (iii.).

Of these main divisions the first falls into five sub-sections—an introduction, three special appeals, and the conclusion. A calamity of unprecedented magnitude has befallen the land. Swarm after swarm of locusts have stripped it bare (i. 2—4). The profligate and luxurious are struck by the blow, for the new wine and other means of indulgence are destroyed (i. 5—7). The religious portion of the community is also stricken, for the materials for sacrifice are cut off, and, as it were, intercourse with Heaven is severed (i. 8—10). The agricultural classes and the whole body politic are concerned, for the sources of existence are annihilated, and the withered aspect of the blasted fields spreads to men's faces, and joy is banished from their homes (i. 11, 12). It is time for the priests to unite the people in a penitential fast and universal prayer for mercy, when already famine gnaws, the seed rots in the blighted soil, pastures and streams are dried up by scorching drought, and the beasts by their distracted movements and cries of agony make appeal to Heaven for compassion (i. 13—20).

The second division describes a new invasion of locusts, more terrible in itself and in its circumstances, because more manifestly accompanied by the personal presence of the Divine Judge. The utterance falls into five sections, of which the opening one dramatically delineates the first appearance in the distance of the dreaded scourge (ii. 1—3); the second, the sickening horror of their nearer approach (ii. 4—6); the third, their resistless onset and men's presaging despair (ii. 7—11); the fourth furnishes a promise of escape to sincere repentance (ii. 12—14), and the fifth completes the continuous summons to national contrition and supplication (ii. 15—17).

The third division, opening with a terse historical statement, tacitly assuming that penitence has been done, and declaring God's forgiveness, proceeds to unroll a new chart of the future. The prophet had foretold the approaching doom of impenitent Israel. He must now unfold the changed character of coming events in view of the great fact of a penitent Israel. The main elements of the programme are depicted in five sections. With repentance and restoration to Divine favour Israel's relation to the great elements of God's government is entirely altered. The impending judgment is withdrawn. Their present distress is relieved and passes into plenty and prosperity. In this deliverance the supreme effect of gladness is the assurance of God's presence with them and His unchanged purpose of grace and glory in them (ii. 18—27). Therefore the prophecy must proceed. Temporal relief is not enough. Israel is destined for more than physical prosperity. The world's consummation is drawing on. To play their part in the grand fulfilment of history, Israel must have a holiness beyond that of the present reformation. The nation must become the perfect instrument of God, inhabited by His character, inspired by His aims, entirely consecrated to His service.

Such a new nature must be created, not by Israel's own act, but by a Divine deed, by a gift from above. The nation must be inspired by God's Spirit in every individual member. Then will the end of all things be near. With Israel's complete fitness to the Divine purpose the consummation of the world's drama must speedily follow. The outpouring of the Spirit is the precursor of judgment. The day of the Lord comes—a day of dread to evil-doers, but of deliverance to all who call on God's name, and whom God calls (ii. 28—32). The final act of judgment has, therefore, no menace any longer for God's people, but directs its violence against the heathen nations, who, persistently impenitent, have remained hostile to Jehovah and His people (iii. 1—8). With weird colours and terrible dramatic power the destruction of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Jehovah judgeth*) is depicted (iii. 9—17). And the prophecy concludes with a glowing picture of the happy repose of finished judgment and mercy, in which all God's enemies are seen to be vanquished, and Israel, prosperous and conferring prosperity, is established for ever and ever (iii. 18—21).

3. *Differences of Interpretation.*—Several points in the interpretation of the book furnish matter for dispute, and, according as they are decided, materially affect our conception of the prophecy. Contrary to the line taken in the preceding sketch, it is

held that the seer is throughout describing future calamities, and not disasters already begun. The theory is possible, but improbable, in the face of such expressions as occur in i. 2, 16—20, and the warm personal and presential feeling breathed into the recital (i. 13; ii. 15—17). Again, the prophecy is sometimes construed as one continuous utterance without change of circumstance, and the verbs in ii. 18 are translated not as pasts describing an occurrence, but as futures enunciating a principle of Divine dealing, or expressing a desire that God may so deal with the supplicants. The rendering is grammatically possible, but, reducing as it does the whole second part of the book from a direct Divine declaration to a mere human wish or inference, it involves an artistic blunder hardly conceivable in a writer of such literary skill, and a construction practically impossible in a prophecy.

Another question concerns the locusts. They are taken literally, and the occasion of the oracle is assumed to have been some terrible period of famine produced by this scourge and aggravated by drought and heat. Another view holds them to be, either in chapter ii. or in both chapters i. and ii., an allegorical piece of imagery, used to portray the devastation of definite invading armies. A third theory counts them to be an apocalyptic device, employed without regard to actual historical events, but with the vague reference and eschatological futurity of the locusts described in Revelation ix. This last notion has little to commend it, and is already discounted if the allegorical view fails to hold its ground. The natural impression of an unbiassed reader is certainly that the locusts are locusts. The burden of proof or disproof, therefore, rests on the second theory.

It is argued that things are ascribed to the locusts proper only to human beings and responsible agents, or contrary to the habits, or beyond the powers of locusts, and that generally the intensity of the feeling and the sombreness of the representation are out of all proportion to a mere plague of locusts. But the calamity is a famine, gaunt, deadly, and inexorable, such as a prolonged plague of locusts might readily produce in a small and mainly agricultural country, as was Judæa when the prophet wrote, while the incompatibilities and exaggerations alleged either exist only in the objectors' fancy or are finely felt strokes of imaginative delineation on the part of the prophetic author.

On the other hand, if the locusts are merely symbols for an invading army, then in chapter ii. we have the symbolic locusts

compared back again with their original, *i.e.* an army, horsemen, warriors, &c.; and in the detail of this illustration we have inserted features certainly discordant with the assumed original (ii. 5, 9, &c.). Again, if the locusts are mere imagery, the minuteness of their portraiture (ii. 1—9), the elaboration of their depredations (i. 1—20), and the exquisite art spent on these delineations must be counted a blunder as monstrous as if a builder were to expend all his carving, gilding, and decoration on the scaffolding instead of on the edifice itself. While what has been called exaggeration of feeling would be equally out of proportion to any invasion, and is so precisely because it is created and justified by the prophetic sense of a more awful presence in the physical calamity; to wit, the approach of *the day of the Lord*, the consummation of all things.

One thing remains to some extent a difficulty in the way of the literal rendering. The prophet describes the cause of the calamity as *the northern army* (ii. 20), a designation unlikely for locusts, which usually come from the south, and in view of references in Ezekiel (xxxviii.—ix.) naturally suggesting the dreaded northern invaders, or more simply the Assyrians. This is not, however, conclusive; the word is capable of other renderings; the verse is besides peculiar, and may be a marginal comment; and in any case this one point cannot outweigh the powerful impression of literal intention made by the whole fashion in which the locusts are handled in the prophecy.

That the second half of the book deals with Israel's relations to the heathen people is no stumbling-block, because its theme is that day of the Lord, of which the plagues in the first half were the precursors, and whose lightnings diverted from penitent Israel now strike the nations. That the end of all things should be conceived in such close, even organic, connection with a physical calamity is no more difficult than if the disaster were of a military nature, and is a universal characteristic of prophetic representation, which always portrays God's punitive energy and gracious activity massively, ideally, and in their finality.

The tide of modern scholarly opinion sets in favour of the literal interpretation. If, however, that should be discarded, the alternative would be, not a reference to the Assyrians, or any actual single invader, but we should see in the book a broad post-Exilic survey of Israel's bygone desolations, and a passionate expectation of ultimate vengeance and requital.

4. *Joel's Place in History.*—The difficulty of fixing the place of Joel in history by internal evidence, which is our sole resource,

appears sufficiently in the fact that dates have been assigned him ranging over five centuries. Practically the question at present lies between two, viz., the beginning of the reign of Joash (say B.C. 860) or in the post-Exilic period about the time of Nehemiah (say B.C. 445). The earlier has in its favour the position of our book in the canon, and may therefore claim to be in possession. It supports and defines its presumptions by a positive construction of the historical references of the prophecy. Joel, it is said, knows Jehoshaphat's triumph (iii. 2; 2 Chron. xx.), Edom's revolt (iii. 19; 2 Kings viii. 20), and the Philistine invasion under Jehoram (iii. 4; 2 Chron. xxi. 16), while he does not know the Assyrian troubles, nor Amaziah's revenge on Edom (2 Kings xiv. 7), nor the Syrian attempt on Jerusalem in the close of Joash's reign (2 Kings xii. 18). He must, therefore, be later than B.C. 885 and earlier than B.C. 840. Within this period the picture of the internal condition of the community excludes the years of Ahaziah and Athalia, and also the later evil years of Joash, while it answers exactly to the period of Joash's minority under the regency of the high priest Jehoiada, say about B.C. 865.

Against this combination the defenders of the post-Exilic date urge that the historical argument is arbitrary, and that the internal features that tell for Joash's minority tell more strongly for Nehemiah's age, while certain larger considerations seem expressly to exclude any early date. The issue is fine and complicated. It is impossible to do more than marshal the evidence and indicate its general bearing. The historical combinations already cited tell strongly for the early date, if Joel has particular hostilities in view beyond mere border quarrels and slave-stealing and dealing. But the weight is diminished by the regularity with which the nations named appear as Israel's enemies, in prophetic denunciations, both before and after the Exile. The trade in slaves to the Levant (iii. 6) and to South Arabia (iii. 8), which was always carried on through the Philistine and Phœnician seaports and the Edomite and Arabian caravans, furnishes no clue from the balanced character of Joel's references.

The strange silence—assuming ii. 20 to refer to locusts—concerning Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, suggests that Joel wrote before or after the era of those great world powers. Perhaps the last, though unmentioned, might have been existent, since it did not rank with the first two in point of injury and hatred. Against the time of Nehemiah is the absence of Samaritans, Moabites, and Ammonites in the list of the foes of Jerusalem. But still more adverse to the pre-Exilic date is the extraordinary

disappearance—as compared with the practice of the other early prophets—of Northern Israel from the prophet's picture of the present and his forecast of the future.

Much is made of the representation of the internal condition of Judah. The entire people is summoned to the fast by blast of trumpet; a locust plague means annihilation; agriculture is the sole resource, therefore, of a small, narrowly circumscribed, and impoverished population. Freeing this statement from prosaic wilfulness, and remembering how small a territory at all times was Judæa, and how reduced was the nation in Joash's time, we cannot allow it much influence on behalf of the later date. If the dispersion and disintegration of territory contemplated in iii. 1—2 are presented as already fully realised, then, spite of such passages as Hosea vi. 11, Amos ix. 14, it is a strong argument for the post-Exilic time. But the prophetic oratorical style mitigates greatly its conclusiveness. The internal organization of the community is held to be purely municipal under priests and elders, while there are no king, princes, statesmen, or warriors. But against the failure to mention the king might be put the failure to mention the post-Exilic high priest. Moreover the community is not explicitly represented as under the government of priests and elders. Only the priests are officially summoned to inaugurate the fast (i. 14). The elders are simply a class picked out for special mention among those to be convened, and probably the word should be rendered *old men* as in i. 2; ii. 16. Moreover, the priestly regency of Joash's minority is not incompatible with the predominance of the priests in Joel's appeal.

More important by far, though difficult of objective valuation, are such considerations as the authoritative bearing of the prophet; the conscious absence of prophetic rivalry and opposition, his harmonious relations with the priesthood, the weight and prominence attached by him to the ceremonial of religion, the central place assigned to sacrifice, and particularly to the meat and drink offerings, the seeming non-existence of high places or idolatry, the absence of polemic against the great national sins that bulk so largely in the pages of other prophets prior to the Exile; and finally the alleged physical, non-political, and generally circumscribed sphere of his prophetic survey and activity. Whether the primary powerful impression of these arguments maintains itself after allowance has been made for disproportionate statement, *a priori* assumptions, the possibilities of Jehoiada's rule, and above all the personal idiosyncrasy of the prophet, is a question that will not be answered with any

approach to unanimity, till scholars are more agreed as to the general course of Israel's history, and the principles that must determine our interpretation of prophecy.

Lines of reasoning are led of a still more doctrinaire description, turning on the prophet's religious conceptions, but their value is merely psychological. One method of investigation remains to be mentioned, viz., the literary relations of Joel to other books of the Old Testament. Ideas and phrases of this book recur from Amos onward along the whole line of prophetic writers. In regard to Amos especially a very plausible case has been made out for Joel's priority, but it is met by strong denial. Perhaps the one sure inference is that Joel is either the first or the last in the prophetic succession. He is either the original prophetic quarry or the latest conglomerate. Looking at his indubitable artistic genius, the second half of the alternatives jars on one's critical instinct. Meantime the question of the book's date remains open, and will hardly be closed except as part of the general settlement of the great controversy concerning the history of Israel.

5. *Style.*—As might be inferred from what has been already said, the style and thought of Joel are strikingly characteristic, notwithstanding numerous assonances of detail with other prophets. In the first half we are under the spell of a descriptive poet or word painter, but the prophetic orator asserts himself in the second half. Language and structure are pure, flowing, and artistic, but the literary excellence is not an argument for either date, but rather a difficulty in the way of his being either the first or the last of the prophetic authors. Personal traits appear in the detailed delineation of the physical aspects of the disaster, in the contrasting vagueness as to the sins that caused it, and in the predominant and all-possessing engrossment of the seer in the grand conception of the day of the Lord. These mental qualities of the writer may account for certain features in his work that are put foward as proof of post-Exilic times.

The limitation of the prophet's religious range and the particularism of his aspirations have been exaggerated. He emphasises the ritual of penitence, doubtless, but he declares it worthless save as the expression of reality (ii. 13). Earthly well-being bulks largely, but as the prelude, promise, and platform of spiritual attainment, privilege, and service (ii. 28; iii. 18). The outpouring of the Spirit is probably confined to Israel, yet salvation depends not on Jewish birth but on spiritual citizenship in God's kingdom (ii. 32). The Messianic future is built on existing conditions and relations, has its home on Zion,

destroys, not converts the heathen, lacks the figure of a personal Messiah, is disappointingly physical in its garb, and comes short of the ethical and spiritual elevation of the pictures of the great prophets. But the fact remains unaltered, that the prophecy is rooted in an absolute faith in the eternal principles of God's government of the world, that its living theme and interest is the march through history of Divine grace and judgment, that it wakes echoes in the thought and apocalyptic expectations of the New Testament, and in its conception of the triumph of God's kingdom as the direct fruit of the plenary gift of God's Spirit has anticipated the wonder of Pentecost, and presaged the inner secret and source of all that is holy and divine in the progress of Christendom.

AMOS.

1. *Place in the Canon.*—In the Hebrew canon of the minor prophets Amos stands third; but in the Septuagint he is placed second. He must not be identified with Amoz, the father of Isaiah, as some of the Greek fathers fancied, for though the names are spelt the same in Greek, they are quite different in Hebrew, and the distinction is sufficiently, though incompletely, marked in our own version. Our knowledge of the man is derived solely from personal references in his book. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is any biographical allusion made to him. Fortunately there is in his prophecy detail enough to furnish a definite and interesting conception of his character and career.

2. *History of the Prophet.*—The prophet was by birth and residence a citizen of Judæa. He belonged to the district of Tekoa, a small town some twelve miles south of Jerusalem, perched on a high hill, looking away eastwards across a waste of barren hills to the Dead Sea peeping through their interstices, and the lofty tableland of Moab bounding the horizon beyond. It stands on the edge of the desert, where the fringes of agriculture thin away into a wilderness of rock and sand, broken only by scattered patches of scanty pasturage. The town can never have been much more than a prosperous village; but the adjacent soil is fruitful and kindly, and its oil and honey became celebrated for their excellence. For strategic purposes it was fortified by Rehoboam, and it had the advantage of lying in a region intersected by some of the busiest highways of commerce. Its inhabitants might see much and hear more, and, in connection with trading caravans, be drawn into travel and become acquainted with the world and its doings. The place was thus in several ways not unsuitable for the training of a prophet, and it is arbitrary to argue, as two or three scholars have recently done, because there is now no sycamore culture in the district, and because Amos possesses an intimate knowledge of the north, that therefore we must look for another Tekoa somewhere in Samaria.

There is more room for reasonable difference of opinion in determining the prophet's precise condition in life. In the superscription of his book he is described as "one of the herdmen of Tekoa" (i. 1). But the word *noqedh*, translated herdman, may mean either one who tends flocks or one who breeds and owns them, in which sense it is used of the king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 4). Again, the designation, "a dresser of sycamore-trees" (vii. 14), leaves it uncertain whether he was a proprietor of sycamore plantations, or whether, as a shepherd hireling, he eked out meagre rations by gathering wild sycamore figs, the coarsest fruit of Palestine, and eaten chiefly by the poorer classes. It is generally held that the balance of probability is turned in favour of the second opinion, by the prophet's declaration that the Lord took him "from following the flock" (vii. 15). But the active pursuit of the pastoral calling is not inconsistent with ownership, or at least sonship to the owner (compare 1 Sam. xvi. 11), and the idea of the prophetic office with its necessity of absolute and instant disposal at the Divine bidding seems to require, not, indeed, a man of wealth (as the Jewish rabbis would have it), but certainly a man who was his own master in the full sense of the word. Nothing positive can be deduced from the degree of culture manifested in the book.

Spite of a floating tradition to the contrary, which still survives in popular circles, we shall see later on that the literary merits of the production must be rated very high. The general information of the writer is comprehensive and minute. He can paint in detail the religious customs, the social conditions, the local circumstances and vicissitudes of every part of the northern kingdom. With the geography and history, the alliances and feuds, trade relations, national institutions, and aspirations of the neighbouring nations, he is thoroughly familiar. He is possessed of profound ideas about nature, providence, the movements of races, and their place and function in the world's government.

For breadth of survey, for strength and massiveness of conception, alike in morals and in religion, he is not surpassed by any of the prophets. He is a poet, an orator, a philosopher, and a statesman. But in those days and in his social environment, he might be all this without being a man of books and cities. Native genius, interest in the traditions of his people, intercourse with passing caravans, personal visits to distant parts, and a spirit awake to the presence and working of God in human history, past, present, and future—these were influences potent enough to educate the man, and admirably adapted to prepare the way for the prophet. And this school was equally open to him, whether he was a poor man, living by his labour, now in

one service, now in another, or a prosperous sheep-master and wealthy owner of fig orchards.

3. *Period of his Public Life.*—The period of his prophetic activity may be fixed, if not with minute precision, at least with broad certainty. It was, the title tells us, and the book (vii. 10) confirms the statement, "in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel" (i. 1), *i.e.* during the closing years of the latter and the early years of the former, when their respective reigns overlapped each other. According to the traditional chronology, that would locate him in the first quarter of the eighth century; by the revised chronology, in the second. No detailed adjustment between the biblical dates and the Assyrian synchronisms, which unfortunately are few and some of them uncertain, has as yet been established. All we can say meantime is, that the prophet's career fell between B.C. 800 and 750; in all probability nearer the last-mentioned limit.

The circumstantial detail, added in the title, that he prophesied "two years before the earthquake," excites our hopes only to disappoint them. The reference is unquestionably to an earthquake that occurred in the time of Uzziah, so terrible as to remain a permanent time-mark in the people's memory; witness the allusion to it in Zechariah xiv. 5, where the prophet says, "Ye shall flee as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah." All attempts, however, to fix the year of this great calamity have proved unavailing, and probably it was specified in the title of this prophecy for moral and religious motives rather than for chronological purposes.

The book itself is full of special allusions to circumstances affecting Israel, Judah, and the surrounding cities and states, but none lends itself effectively to our inquiry. What is said of Gath, Hamath, Calneh, Edom, is variously interpreted, in order to define more nearly the origin of the prophecy, but our knowledge of contemporary history is too meagre to establish any quite reliable combinations. If the description of the tabernacle of David as "fallen" (ix. 11) is suggested, not by the great national schism, but by the exceptional depression of Judah's fortunes when Uzziah came to the throne, then we should have a right to place Amos in the section of Jeroboam's reign coincident with the accession of Uzziah, and prior to the first military successes of that energetic monarch, who so speedily and splendidly retrieved the fortunes of his state.

With this location tallies well the general tenor of the prophet's references to Judæa, and likewise the picture he paints of the condition of the northern kingdom. It is the portrait of a people

strong and prosperous, free from hostile menace, flushed with recent triumphs, arrogant in their confidence of security, and demoralised on the one hand by the cost, and on the other by the booty, of successful wars. This fits exactly the culmination of Jeroboam's career, when, released from the harassing rivalry of Damascus by the crippling attacks made on that state by Assyria, he seized the opportunity to develop the internal resources and extend the frontiers of his kingdom, till he had re-established Israel's rule from Hamath in the north to the brook of the Arabah in the south. (Compare 2 Kings xiv. 25, with Amos vi. 14.) This, of course, meant wealth and prosperity to the military chiefs and official families, as also to the commercial and monied classes.

But war, whether fortunate or unfortunate, is always a crushing burden to the common people, and especially to the peasantry. Besides the expenditure of blood and treasure, which they have to supply, there is the loss of devastated or neglected harvests, and the heavy taxes and levies made to maintain a large army, a drain on the country that seems to be referred to in the peculiar phrase, "the king's mowings" (vii. 1, compared with 1 Kings xviii. 5, 8, 1 Samuel viii. 14, 15). Apart from actual oppression, the small yeoman holders of the soil get behind, fall into the hands of money-lenders, have to part with their produce at unfair prices, mortgage their ancestral lands, and ultimately lose them, becoming either hired labourers or out-and-out bondsmen. In the towns also property and wealth accumulate in the hands of the upper ranks, while the condition of the poor and dependent classes deteriorates. The usual ethical mischiefs supervene, in luxury and sensuality on the one hand, and on the other discontent and loss of self-respect, to the corruption of public morality and religion, and ultimately the dissolution of society. That is precisely the process of national demoralisation which looks at us out of the pages of Amos. It is the same sad sight that confronts us in the first portion of the prophecy of Hosea, who was either contemporary with or a little later than Amos. In both cases it marks with convincing force the period of these prophetic utterances, and compels us to locate them in the afternoon of Jeroboam's brilliant reign.

4. *The Prophet's Mission.*—Though a citizen of the southern kingdom, Amos was divinely commissioned to work in the northern. Whether he speaks directly of Israel, or more imaginatively of Joseph (v. 6, 15; vi. 6), or Isaac (vii. 9), or uses forms of indirect address, it is always Ephraim that he has in view, Ephraim that he threatens, Ephraim that he appeals to. There is but one or at most two exceptions, when, in vi. 1, he couples

Zion with Samaria, and possibly he may mean to include Judah in the words, "the whole family, which I brought up out of the land of Egypt" (iii. 1). It is not contrary to our assertion that the fiat of judgment proceeds from Zion (i. 2), nor that Judah makes one of the doomed states (ii. 4, 5), with the certainty of whose destruction he preludes the denunciation of Israel, nor that his ideal picture of the restored nation groups itself about the Davidic throne. Hence it is needless to suppose that the introduction of Judæa in these places is an afterthought, not put in execution till the time when the actual utterances against Israel were committed to writing. They fit in quite naturally with their vicinity, and rather throw into relief the fact, that the prophet's field of work was in the north, and his living audience Israel.

It is the common supposition that the whole of these prophecies were delivered in one jet of impassioned utterance and on one single occasion; that, in fact, the prophet's mission was summed up and exhausted in his appearance at Bethel. There is much to suggest and support this idea, in the peculiar way in which the incident of Amos's collision with the priest Amaziah juts out in the mid-stream of his prophecy, and in the seemingly intentional limitation in the title of his action to a point just two years before the earthquake. But all we may certainly argue from these features is, that the testimony of Amos reached its supreme achievement in the scene at Bethel, while he may have been labouring previously in Ephraim, and indeed afterwards as well; for it is not said that the prophet was immediately either expelled by force or silenced by motives of personal prudence. The contents and arrangement of his book tend rather to the opposite conclusion. A more prolonged and widely-diffused activity is implied in the intimate acquaintance displayed by the seer with the fortunes and misfortunes of Ephraim; in the phrases which suggest futile pleadings with them in the past; in the vivid directness of the appeal to the haughty and heartless ladies of Samaria; and especially in Amaziah's assertion that Amos had conspired against the king in "the midst of the house of Israel" and that "the land" was not able "to bear all his words" (vii. 10).

It would therefore be improper to maintain dogmatically that the contents of our book were delivered entire to the gay crowd before the sanctuary at Bethel; or that, if delivered, the appeal was not a recapitulation of a previous ministry of some duration. Equally impossible is it to attempt to define what part of the book was orally uttered and what was not. Like the other prophetic Scriptures, the book is in all likelihood a condensed record of the outstanding truths taught during a more or less

continuous activity. On the other hand it is possible, as the greater number of commentators interpret the statement in vii. 14, 15, that in Amos we have an exception to the general rule, and that his prophetic action was confined to one brief episode of Divine inspiration let into a career otherwise undistinguished by either the gift or the ministry of prophecy. That is, perhaps, the natural, though not the inevitable inference from his protest in reply to the priest's taunt, that he is no prophet getting a living by that profession, but that God took him from following the flock and sent him to prophesy to Israel. That the memoir of his utterances was not composed till some time later seems certain, if the title formed part of the first draft, for it makes mention of the great earthquake as an event that had happened two years later. What the actual interval was cannot, of course, be determined.

5. *Genuineness and Unity of the Book.*—The book, as it left the prophet's hands, is an orderly planned and perfect whole. Beyond one or two possible omissions (iv. 3), or transpositions (v. 7 to follow 9), the genuineness and unity of the book are almost beyond question. It is in the interest of a theory rather than on sufficient grounds of fact, that a few sections are asserted to be interpolations, viz., iv. 13; v. 8, 9; ix. 5, 6. and sometimes vi. 2. The plan of the book is well defined. Amos's message is predominantly one of doom. His duty is to denounce Divine judgment on Israel's incurable depravity. He proclaims nothing less than the downfall of the throne, the exile of the people, and the dissolution of the state.

The book consists of three sections. In the first (i., ii.) there is a general announcement of approaching destruction as a punishment of sin. The second section (iii.—vi.) expands and reiterates the indictment and the menace. The third (vii.—ix.) is a dramatic enforcement and summing-up of the impending doom, passing over into promise for the future. These larger divisions fall easily into smaller subdivisions, and a regular progression of thought may with some degree of confidence be traced through them. The first (i., ii.) has the character of a prelude. The seer has heard the roar of approaching judgment. He sees towering on the northern horizon the black thunderstorm of Assyrian invasion. Already, as in the lurid light that preludes a storm, the fair face of Canaan seems to grow pallid and withered (i. 2). Slowly the lightning-laden cloud rolls over the whole circle of Palestinian states, striking with destruction now one, now another (i. 3—ii. 3), till at the seventh its fires fall on Judah (ii. 4, 5), and then concentrate their condensed and prolonged terrors upon Israel (ii. 6—15). It is usually held that the sins for which the

nations are to be punished are violations of humanity, but it is more consistent to think that, as in the case of Judah and Israel, the common cause of judgment is thwarting God's will in His gracious government of mankind.

The next great division (iii.—vi.) consists of five parts, marked by similar headings and order of thought. The first emphasizes the certainty of judgment. As surely as effect follows cause and proves its existence, the prophet's mission argues God in motion for judgment, the Divine anger postulates sin in Israel, and sin must bring ruin (iii. 1—iv. 3). Next we have the hopelessness of more moderate chastisements producing an adequate repentance (iv. 4—13). Then, as a natural sequel, follows an impassioned exposure of the ineradicable fixedness of their religious and social declension (v. 1—18), which, in the two closing sections, expands into a woe pronounced, first, on their religious debasement (v. 18—27), and, second, on their moral corruption (vi. 1—14).

The last large division (vii.—ix.) is framed upon five visions, devised to depict powerfully the dark destiny of the nation. We have, first, destruction by locusts; second, by fire; third, the wall condemned upon application of the plumb line (vii. 1—9). At this point occurs the interruption of the altercation with the priest Amaziah (vii. 10—17). Resuming, the prophet pictures under the symbol of ripe fruit the nation's readiness for destruction, and works out the thought at some length (viii. 1—14). Finally he presents God standing over the altar in the sinful temple, hurling it in ruins on the heads of the worshippers, pursuing to his death the last one of the fugitives, and making an end of old impenitent Israel (ix. 1—10). But with accomplished judgment comes the recoil of recollection, and the prophet proceeds to show how the sifting of Israel among the nations will end in restoration. Once more the ideal Davidic rule and empire shall be established, and in more than earthly prosperity and permanence God's people shall possess God's land and be God's kingdom on earth (ix. 11—15).

6. *Literary Qualities.*—Jerome remarks that Amos was "rude in speech but not in knowledge"; and Jewish tradition has been pleased to credit him with a stutter or impediment of speech. This is probably the origin of a mistaken idea that his book is badly written, or at least betrays the rusticity of its author. On the contrary, the Hebrew of Amos ranks among the purest and most powerful compositions of the Old Testament. His language is choice and melodious, possibly in a few peculiar spellings recording a provincial pronunciation, or more likely the slips of copyists' pens. His style is terse, dramatic, and simple, but very

pointed and forcible. He loves brief uninvolved sentences, though occasionally carried away into passionate appeal or lyrical outbursts of poetic delineation. He indulges much in question, apostrophe, and exclamation. He is an orator more than an artist or a bard. With all his simplicity we find traces of paranomasia, rhythmic arrangement, and rhetorical construction. His exposition abounds in rich and varied imagery derived from nature, and striking illustrations taken from every-day life. The ordered arrangement, compact style, and general literary finish of his book suggest slow, careful, and leisurely construction, while the fire of its invective, the impetus of its appeals, and the terrible directness of its denunciation prove it the record and embodiment of speech originally orally delivered.

7. *The Prophet's Teaching.*—The teaching of Amos is determined by the wants of his auditors, coloured by the character of his own personality, and limited by the attainments of his time. His prophecy is not a system of theology nor a treatise of moral philosophy. It is a matter-of-fact protest against definite sins and errors, and a practical preparation to secure the triumph of religion in impending strains and changes. Israel, intoxicated by success, and lured by the flesh, had forsaken the true Jehovah. The god of the calf-worship was a physical and carnal deity, pleased with a sensual service, pacified by sacrifices, careless of justice and truth and mercy. The life of the nation may be eaten out by oppression, and corruption, and luxury, and lust, but Israel is Jehovah's people, and—so they argued—He will not for personal pride permit them to suffer loss, but the day of their need will be the day of His gracious and triumphant intervention. This blind superstition was destined speedily to be shattered by the overwhelming avalanche of Assyrian invasion. If faith was to survive, then the lesson of Providence must be interpreted beforehand and set in its true light.

This was the mission of Amos and of the prophets that followed him. Jehovah was not the God the people fancied Him. Sacrifices and incense are nothing to Him whose throne is the universe. Jehovah is a God of mercy and righteousness. With this corrupt Israel He is not pleased, but displeased. Them indeed He chose out of all the nations of the earth to be His people. But, therefore, He will not favour them. He will the more sternly punish their sins. His day of visitation is at hand, but for unrighteous Israel it will be a day, not of deliverance, but of vengeance. He has already gathered the fires of His fury together, and is about to launch them on the states of Palestine, and to execute just retribution on His guilty people. These were startling and creative conceptions, whose value in the growth of revelation was

immense. For a national and fleshly notion of the covenant tie between God and Israel this teaching substituted an ethical and religious. In place of a merely natural explanation of the world's course, it presented the sublime thought of a righteous government and guidance of human history. Beyond all else, it set forth the ethical nature of the Creator and Ruler of the world in unapproachable majesty and might. In the words of a very helpful writer:—"Morality is that for the sake of which all things exist; it is the alone essential thing in the world. It is no postulate, no idea, but at once a necessity and a fact, the most intensely living of personal powers—Jehovah the God of Hosts." That is a great lesson, and one that religion is too apt to forget.

On the surface Amos may seem to make too much of mere morality, but it is only an appearance. With him, to do right is to serve God, and the motive must be the love of God and of our neighbour. The central note of his prophecy rings like a prelude of the great definition of the Apostle:—"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

OBADIAH.

1. *Authorship and Date.*—The brief prophecy of Obadiah concerning Edom, which stands fourth among the minor prophets in the Hebrew Bible and fifth in the Septuagint, presents little difficulty to the expositor, but confronts the critic with very perplexing problems. The title declares it to be a record of the vision of Obadiah, and tells us nothing about him. It mentions neither his father nor his birthplace, and in the book itself there is no positive statement of the period in which he lived, nor any quite definite clue to determine the date of his prophecy. All we know certainly about him is his name. That is a derivative of a word meaning servant or worshipper, and the sacred name of Israel's covenant, Jehovah God. It is a type of name common in Semitic languages (Abdeel, Abdallah, &c.), and it occurs very frequently of persons mentioned in the Old Testament—especially of members of the tribe of Levi. Among these the best known are a captain of King Ahab's (1 Kings xviii.) and a prince employed by Jehoshaphat in the religious reform attempted in his reign (2 Chron. xvii. 7).

Tradition, quick to utilise its opportunity in the absence of information, has imagined our prophet identical with several of these, but the combinations are now universally recognised as simply plays of devout fancy, though one or two modern scholars have expressed some favour for the identification with Jehoshaphat's prince. On such conjectures clearly no argument for the date can be founded, and unfortunately not much can be gathered from the place assigned to the book in the canon of the minor prophets. For the order has been determined by other considerations besides chronology, and the arrangement is not the same in the Septuagint.

In both, however, Obadiah holds an early place, and it may be taken for granted that the collectors went, at all events, generally on the plan of placing first the pre-Exilic works. But the presumption in favour of an early date springing from this generali-

sation can hardly be pressed in face of the doubts as to the date of Joel, Jonah, parts of Micah, Zechariah, &c. And on other grounds as well, critics of all schools prefer to explain the place of Obadiah after Amos by the idea that it was inserted here in order to serve as an amplification of the curt reference to Edom in the closing words of that prophecy.

If we turn to the book itself and look in it for some historical allusion or other sure mark of age, we find ourselves still destitute of any solid foothold. An expression in ver. 20 has been seized on by some ingenious interpreters and held to indicate that Obadiah was one of a company of exiles settled on the coast of Phœnicia, or in Egypt, or in Babylonia. But it is a question whether the word means "host," or "stronghold," or "sandy coast," and the proper rendering of the present text of the entire verse is doubtful. If we could settle the locality of the Sepharad, named in the same verse, we might have something to guide us. But it is variously identified by the Ancients with the Bosphorus, Spain, and France, and by modern scholars with a Saparda in Media, or a Çparda near Ionia (probably Sardis), both of which names occur in the cuneiform inscriptions. Beyond these there is no local or circumstantial detail to serve as a key to the time of the prophecy. We are, therefore, relegated in our conjectures to the general impression produced on our minds by a study of the atmosphere, aim, and actual contents of the book.

2. *Analysis of the Contents.*—The prophet is conscious of a military movement among the nations. It is instigated by Jehovah, directed against Edom, and will result in its downfall and humiliation. Spite of the strength of their rocky fastnesses, they shall be defeated and their wealth plundered. Trusted allies shall betray them, and so with all their vaunted wisdom and might the children of Esau shall be caught in the snare of their own selfish policy and utterly destroyed (vv. 1—9). The cause of their doom is the wrong done to their kinsmen, the Israelites, whom they abandoned in their dire extremity, aiding their foes, rejoicing in their calamity, sharing in the pillage, cutting off the fugitives and selling them into slavery (vv. 10—14). For the Divine judgment, now complete on Israel, must pass on to his heathen enemies and requite their injuries. In the general retribution the rescued people of Jehovah shall dwell safe and holy on Mount Zion, regain their old possessions, burn up Edom like stubble, overflow into the lands of the surrounding peoples, establish a strong government in Zion, and then "the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (vv. 15—21).

3. The fulfilment of Obadiah's prediction of the destruction of Edom, even if we could fix the date with precision, would not

help us much to settle the natal age of the prophecy. Prior to the Exile the relation of Judæa to Idumea was one of friendly alliance, suzerainty, or conquest, alternated by intervals of petty border hostility or open war. Subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem, in which the Edomites sided with the invaders, Idumea suffered apparently a severe disaster at the hands of the Chaldeans soon after; under Judas Maccabæus the country was crippled, and completely conquered by John Hyrcanus a little later; but its worst, and what we may fairly count its final overthrow, did not take place till after the birth of Christ.

This difficulty in fixing the fulfilment matters little. To determine the birth of a prophecy we must seek not its ultimate fruits in the future, but its hidden subterranean roots in the past. A prophetic word of God, at all events as a general rule, does not emerge out of nothing, but grows out of living conditions, embodies the needs and aspirations of the time, and satisfies the immediate spiritual necessities of the men to whom it is given. We may, therefore, take it that Obadiah does not predict in cold blood atrocities to be perpetrated by the Edomites and denounce retribution on them, but that his oracle of vengeance rests on some definite great disaster suffered by Jerusalem, aggravated and embittered by the treachery and cruelty of the Edomites.

The outstanding military calamities recorded in the history are: (1) the capture of Jerusalem by Shishak under Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv., 2 Chron. xii.); (2) the invasion of the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi.); (3) the defeat of Amaziah by Jehoash of Israel and partial demolition of the defences of Jerusalem (2 Kings xiv., 2 Chron. xxv.); (4) the successful campaign of Ephraim and Syria against Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii.); and (5) the sack and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxiv., 2 Chron. xxxvi.). With the exception of the first, each of these has been made the occasion of Obadiah's oracle, and the book is variously ascribed to the reigns of Jehoram, Uzziah, Ahaz, the period just before or after the fall of Jerusalem, while a few critics place it after the Restoration, or even reduce it to the end of the fourth century.

It may be fairly said that opinion is seriously divided only between either the reigns of Jehoram and Uzziah, or the time of the Chaldean conquest. To choose between these must be difficult, perhaps impossible, for we have nothing more definite to go upon than our knowledge of the history, which is meagre, and our impressions of the several elements of the prophecy—a method of investigation which is too purely subjective to give results that are sure. The description of Edom's pride (vv. 1—9) has an archaic ring in its graphic imagery. Its adoption in the prophecy

suggests that at the time Edom was independent, strong, prosperous, and in high repute for wisdom and wealth. The reference (ver. 7) to confederates indicates that Edom had entered into alliance with a power or powers hostile to Judæa. So far these appearances suit admirably the Chaldean combination, but are probably equally consistent with the earlier dates.

The following passage (vv. 10—14), whose imperative (see Revised Version) constitutes not a future warning but a dramatic denunciation, describes a series of cruel and treacherous injuries inflicted on the Jews by their Idumean kinsmen. The warmth of the invective proves the actuality of the wrong, and either its recent occurrence or the indelible nature of the resentment created by it. Now Edomite treachery and cruelty had existed all along and been resented by Israel (Amos i. 6, 9, 11; ix. 12, &c.), but in the precise form and detail of the offence and in the intensity of the indignation produced we find nothing comparable till we come to certain Exilic utterances (Ezek. xxv., xxxv.; Lam. iv.; Psalm cxxxvii.), which read as if they had been written in chorus with the heat and passion of the one before us. This resemblance is not a proof, but it makes a strong presumption for the later origin of our prophecy.

It is perhaps true that the form, in which the conception of the day of the Lord (ver. 15) appears, indicates an advanced point in the progress of prophecy, but a much more solid argument may be built upon the picture of Israel's disaster and restoration. It is not merely a disabled state or a partially plundered capital that we have delineated, but a dismembered and dispossessed and dispersed nation. Moreover, the chosen people no longer exists in the divided kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah, for in the Restoration the latter bears both names (ver. 18), and is to occupy the lands that used to belong to the former (ver. 19). The impression is hardly to be resisted, that this situation is incompatible with any earlier period than the Chaldean conquest, and that the prophet regards it not as a disaster anticipated, but as a calamity already felt and experienced.

This critical construction of the date might be allowed to hold the field unchallenged, were it not for one grave difficulty that stands in the way. The opening section of Obadiah is reproduced, frequently with verbal exactness, in a prophecy against Edom found in the forty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah. The resemblance is too close to allow a doubt of the relationship. The only question is, which is the parent and which the child, unless, indeed, they should prove to be brothers. In Obadiah the ideas appear in a natural order and logical progression, making a harmonious and compact picture, while in Jeremiah they are reversed

in sequence, broken off from one another, mingled with other matter, and so deprived of their cumulative and orderly significance. Thus verses 1—4, 5—6, 8—9 of Obadiah correspond to verses 14—16, 9—10, 7—8 in Jeremiah, where the omission of all reference to the folly of trusting perfidious allies (Obad. 7) leaves the ridicule of Edom's pretended wisdom without definite justification. Therefore, if the one is directly dependent on the other, we are forced to the conclusion that Obadiah is the original, and that Jeremiah has borrowed from him, just as in the prophecies against Moab (Jer. xlviii.) he incorporates elements from the older oracles embedded in Isaiah xv., xvi. and Numbers xxi. and xxiv.

An acute and microscopically minute argument has been led to show from details of language that the obligation is on the other side, but it is met by an equally ingenious analysis, and, moreover, cannot outweigh the conviction produced by the superior coherence, conciseness, and simplicity of the passage in Obadiah. Now, spite of an attempt to question the date if not the genuineness of Jer. xlix., it may be taken for granted that the chapter was produced some time prior to the fall of Jerusalem, and by the above chain of reasoning the opening section of Obadiah was known to the author. The dilemma is met in several ways. The conclusion is accepted, counted proof positive for the earlier dates, and Obadiah is relegated to the reigns of Jehoram or Uzziah, notwithstanding the perplexities occasioned by the closing pictures of the production. Or the two prophets are taken to have been contemporaries, and by either allowing Obadiah's entire description to be predictive in respect of the offence as well as the punishment, or by dating the forty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah a little later than the Chaldean disaster, a sufficient interval is created between them to permit of the literary use presupposed in the relation of the two passages.

A third course is possible, and has much to commend it. The correspondence is entirely confined to the first section of Obadiah, for other alleged parallels are trivial and dubious. This opening paragraph of our prophet, as we have seen, suggests by its character and style an early origin, while it is only in what follows that we encounter the strong marks of the Chaldean period. The practice of building prophecies fitted to the time on the utterances of earlier seers was a common one, as we can see in the writings of Isaiah, Micah, Joel, Jeremiah, &c. May it not, therefore, be that an inspired man of God, to comfort and hearten his generation in the dark Chaldean age, took up the defiance of Israel's ancient enemies bequeathed by the faith of a former age, and, as Jeremiah had used it in anticipation of the catastrophe

adapted it to meet the doubts and perplexities and to satisfy the demands of faith in the special circumstances and relations that followed the great collapse of Israel's national existence? The supposition is one that meets all the points of the problem. It explains certain variations of atmosphere and point of view in the book, the correspondence of Jeremiah with one division only, the remarkable resemblances between certain phrases in the other division and the Book of Joel, and fits admirably into the suggestions of the particular place assigned to the prophecy in the canon of the minor prophets.

4. *Object of Prophecy.*—In later times Edom came to be the supreme antipathy and the typical enemy of Jewry. So, when the actual Edomites ceased to be, the name was transferred first to tyrant Rome and then to persecuting Christendom, and the impassioned words of Obadiah became a favourite vehicle for the expression of national and religious hatred. That is a misunderstanding and a misuse of the book. The prophecy is, indeed, instigated by indignation against Edom, and the retributive destruction of that people is its theme. But the subject is worked out in a large fashion that precludes the suspicion of petty vengefulness, and justifies the book's place in the record of revelation. The motive is not the gratification of national spite, nor is the aim to either warn or edify the Edomites. The seer speaks out of the need of his own heart and to the hearts of his people. What creates his vision and compels its utterance is an indestructible sense of the eternal justice and fidelity, and of the Divine destiny of Israel in building up the kingdom of God on earth. The tragedy of Edom is but a part in the great drama. It is therefore presented on a vast stage, and has the world's history for its background. Very real and concrete to the prophet, no doubt, are the antagonisms of Israel and his enemies, but none the less really and consciously, even if in a fashion grand beyond his conceptions, it is the collision of universal forces and everlasting principles, that is embodied in them. Limited and material the presentment of those issues may be, but they carry in their bosom the consummation of the ages. Within the rivalry of Edom and Israel there was wrapped the eternal antithesis of truth and falsehood, good and evil, and the vision of an earthly kingdom on Mount Zion is finding its fulfilment in the silent, slow, but sure advent of the kingdom of God and of our Christ.

JONAH.

1. *Peculiarity of the Book.*—The position of the Book of Jonah among the minor prophets is remarkable. It is not a prophecy but a narrative. Unlike all the other members of the group, it does not contain the utterance, or a collection of the utterances, of a prophet. With the exception of the words, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown," it is from beginning to end the recital of a prophet's self-will and ignorance, and their discipline and correction by God. The interest of the story, the striking character of some of its situations, and the use made of it by our Lord, have stirred the imagination of its readers, exercised the ingenuity of theologians, and made the book the best known and most widely studied of all the shorter prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament.

2. *Life of Jonah.*—The prophet whose strange experiences are recorded in the book is described as Jonah, the son of Amittai. Only once elsewhere do these proper names recur in the Old Testament, and there in the same relationship to one another. In 2 Kings xiv. 25. we read that Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, "restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hefer." The identity of the two men can hardly be made subject to the shadow of a doubt. We may, therefore, take it for granted that the prophet of our story was born at Gath-hefer, a small town on the eastern frontier of Zebulon, a little over an hour's journey north of Nazareth, and probably represented by the modern hamlet of El-Mesched.

His prophetic activity must have been either prior to or contemporary with the reign of Jeroboam II., that is, somewhere about the year B.C. 800. From the nature of the reference to him in Kings, it is evident that he must have been the author of important and considerable oracles, which lingered in oral

tradition or were embodied in written records. But no specimen of his work has come down to us, unless he is the author, as has been suggested, of the ancient prophecy against Moab, incorporated in Isaiah xv. and xvi.; but this is at best no more than an ingenious conjecture. In the Greek revision of the Book of Tobit (xiv. 4) the threat of Jonah against Nineveh is quoted, and there are several references to him in the New Testament (Matt. xii. 39—41, xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29—30).

The Jewish tradition, mentioned by Jerome, that he was the miraculously restored son of the widow of Zarephath is on the face of it evidently a play of rabbinical fancy, founded on the resemblance between the meaning of the name Amittai (truth) and the exclamation of the glad-hearted mother—"Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (1 Kings xvii. 24). The grave of Jonah is shown at El-Mesched, and among the ruins of Nineveh there is a mound named after him, Nebbi Junus.

3. *Salient Features.*—The salient features of the story may be summarised as follows. Jonah, commissioned to denounce doom on Nineveh for its wickedness, recoils from the task. He fears that the city may repent and God relent, and he either counts such a result detrimental to his professional repute, or is reluctant to be the minister of salvation to the hated heathen capital. To avoid this repugnant mission to the East, and to escape from the presence of Jehovah, he takes ship for Tarshish in the extreme West. Pursued by a storm, detected as the culprit by the casting of lots, Jonah submits, confesses his guilt, and, to save his innocent companions from sharing his fate, causes himself to be thrown overboard. Instantly the storm ceases; the sailors fear Jehovah, offer sacrifices and make vows; while Jonah, now penitent and submissive, is preserved from drowning by a great fish, prepared by God to swallow him up alive, and convey him back to the shore.

In this position of imprisonment, but also of deliverance, Jonah composes a poem of grateful thanksgiving to God, and after three days and three nights of confinement is cast out upon the dry land. Despatched anew to preach to Nineveh, Jonah complies, enters the great city, proclaims its destruction in forty days, produces universal panic and repentance, whereupon God pities and pardons the contrite capital. Filled with chagrin at the foreseen result of his mission, the prophet complains of the Divine compassion, and is rebuked. Still dissatisfied and rebellious, he is sharply disciplined, and finally put to shame by the startling inconsistency between his excessive regard for and sorrow over the loss of a plant which he had not worked to pro-

duce, but that had given him pleasure, while he grudges God's sparing the great city with its myriads of innocent human lives His own Divine hands had made. Thus the book ends with the majestic thought that in God's government of men, Gentile as well as Jew, penitence universally procures pardon, since human life is everywhere God's loving workmanship, in which He has pleasure, and which He will not willingly pain, and only in the last extremity of impenitence destroy.

4. *Structure and Style.*—Though the composition makes no express claim to be from the pen of Jonah, and the narrative throughout is carried on in the third person, it has been taken for granted in Jewish and Christian tradition alike that the book is a piece of autobiography. It begins abruptly with a conjunction, as if detached from an antecedent narrative, and it ends in an unfinished fashion without telling us what became of the hero. Hence it is thought that it may have originally belonged to a larger biography of Jonah, or to a collection of stories of the early prophets of action who preceded the prophets of speech and writing. There are striking resemblances in it to the tales of Elijah and Elisha recorded in the Books of the Kings, particularly to the account of Elijah's despair (1 Kings xix.), while the conversation between God and the prophet irresistibly reminds us of the Divine dialogues in the early chapters of Genesis.

The style throws no decisive light upon the probable date, though the vocabulary presents a number of peculiar words and uses of words that have been held to indicate a late origin. But recent Hebrew grammarians incline to ascribe such peculiarities rather to a northern origin or to local individual circumstances. The statement that Nineveh was an exceeding great city has been taken to show that at the time it was penned the capital of Assyria had already long been a thing of the past; but the phrase may be an editorial note, or it may equally well be construed as a description of the city as Jonah found it. The poetical prayer, recorded in chapter ii., is a mosaic of quotations from the Book of Psalms, which certainly furnishes a strong argument against a very early date, provided this poem is an original part of the composition.

Very powerful arguments may be drawn from the contents, spirit, and theological tendency of the book. How, it is asked, could such a work have been produced during the Assyrian period? Is such a friendly attitude towards Nineveh conceivable, while the Assyrian capital was the object of Hebrew hate and dread, and the focus of the bitterest invective of every Jewish prophet? How, too, could such an unflattering picture of a

prophet be painted during the prime and glory of living prophecy? On the other hand, it may be asked, how teaching so broad in its charity and free in its scope is consistent with the hard narrowness and selfish bigotry of later post-Exilic Judaism? Such considerations have, and ought to have, great weight; but their effect will vary according to individual preconceptions and beliefs as to the history of Israel's literature and religion. Accordingly we need not be surprised to find that this enigmatical book is ascribed by competent and devout scholars to various dates, that range between the eighth and fourth centuries before Christ. Nor, in the absence of any express declaration or decisive mark of time in the book itself, is the date likely to be otherwise than long an undecided problem of Old Testament study.

5. *Historical Validity.*—Coming now to the contents of the narrative, we are confronted by a question as to the literary character of the work. Have we to deal with a literal, matter-of-fact history, or with an allegorical and pictorial composition? To answer this question we must examine the story, and strive to neither exaggerate its peculiarities nor minimise its difficulties. Unquestionably the narrative contains much that is startling, and that ought to make us in any case reserved in our assertions, and chary of dogmatism. He does but a sorry service to Revelation who lays on it needless loads and burdens too heavy to be borne. On the other hand the actual perplexities of this book have often been unreally magnified, and not a few have been gratuitously invented.

It has been urged that the mission of Jonah to Nineveh is inconsistent with the idea of Hebrew prophecy, and a solecism in Old Testament religious thought. Doubtless it is unusual and in some respects unique, but in remembrance of the relations maintained by his predecessors Elijah and Elisha with Syria, the connection of Jonah with Assyria is not so utterly out of the question (compare also Hosea v. 13). It was also the fashion to regard the descriptions of Nineveh's area and population as grotesque exaggerations, but recent discoveries and decipherments tend to confirm them and their echoes in classical authors.

Much has been made of the representation of Jonah composing in the whale's belly an elaborate poem, which in its general tenor and in some of its details is not very evidently appropriate to the position of a man in such a living tomb. This difficulty, which springs from a literalistic reading of the story, was long ago disposed of by the common-sense of Luther, who remarked that we are not to suppose that Jonah "said just these words with his mouth and set them so in order," but they show us

what were the mood of his mind and the thoughts of his heart as he fought his battle with death. The amazing effect on Nineveh of the preaching of a prophet in a foreign tongue and in the name of an alien deity is a graver difficulty, but not by any means unthinkable in face of the astonishing possibilities of superstitious awe and religious panic. Much more unaccountable is the utter absence of any reference to so extraordinary an event in the historical books of the Bible, and in the copious subsequent prophecies that deal with Assyria and its relation to Israel. To those who accept the fact of miracle the marvels of the fish and the gourd are not in themselves stumbling-blocks, and a reverent faith in the supernatural of revelation will repudiate all well-meant attempts to reduce their wondrousness by unreliable travellers' stories and vagaries of natural history.

The real difficulty about the element of the miraculous in the Book of Jonah consists, for believing minds, rather in the amount and the kind of it. From beginning to end the narrative is one continuous chain of surprises, providences, and marvels of a very unusual description. And what is more significant still, much of it is, so far as we can perceive, unnecessary for the practical accomplishment of the matter-of-fact object assigned, while it as evidently serves with unequalled effectiveness a didactic purpose, viz., to emphasize and throw into intense relief certain truths of the very first importance in revelation. To this must be added a certain indefiniteness and lack of detail which mark the story. We are not informed where Jonah was landed, how he made his way to Nineveh, the name of the Assyrian king, what passed between monarch and prophet, while what finally became of Jonah is untold in the story, which in fact terminates in a moral or doctrine.

The value of these observations, and their critical import may be very diversely construed, but there is general agreement on the following points. The miraculous ingredient forms the very warp and woof of the composition, and cannot by any possibility be detached without the literary demolition of the piece. Nevertheless the fact that the mechanism or marvel of the supernatural are not dwelt upon or at all elaborated, proves that the miraculous is not the prime interest or theme, but simply the machinery or vehicle of a didactic purpose. And in like manner the historical is not an object in itself, but is subordinated as means to end to subserve the ethical and religious teaching, which is the supreme motive and final aim of the book.

6. *Various Interpretations.*—These considerations have originated a considerable variety of interpretations, and have had their proper influence in shaping the views of even the most

zealous defenders of the historical validity of the narrative and the most uncompromising believers in the supernatural. Thus it is urged that, while the book is a trustworthy chronicle of actual events, the essential significance of these must be sought in their symbolical character, and their permanent value in the typical or prophetic import of the occurrences. Some devout but imaginative interpreters have endeavoured to reduce the difficulty of the miraculous by quoting parallel wonders from apocryphal bits of natural history, or by supposing that the conscience-stricken prophet had a dream in the ship, or that the story grew out of a misunderstanding of a poem of Jonah's.

It has also been suggested that the story is a Hebrew adaptation of the myth of the rescue of Andromeda from the sea monster on the Joppa coast by Perseus, or the parallel myth of Hesione and Hercules, or that it is a variation of the Babylonian myth about the fish god Oannes, who rose from the sea to teach the people the arts and institutions of civilisation. This theory has as little likelihood as have the naturalistic evasions of the supernatural, which is inextricably woven into the framework of the narrative.

There is probably no intermediate resting-place for intelligent faith between a simple acceptance of the history, and the theory held by many believing scholars, who, influenced by no shrinking from the supernatural but purely by the literary character and didactic bent of the story, have found in it a kind of composition akin to the Book of Job, or the pictorial prophetic visions and symbolical actions recounted in the memoirs of the prophets, and which in the present case may be more exactly defined as a species of spiritual allegory or religious parable, founded on a more or less extensive basis of historical fact. Between these theories opinions will continue to be divided, at least until we have reached a more thorough knowledge of ancient modes of thought, and a profounder understanding of the variety of intellectual channel and literary expression open to a Divine revelation.

7. *The Inspired Meaning.*—It is a happy circumstance that we may differ widely in our estimate of the literary framework of the book without missing its inspired meaning or frustrating its revelation purpose. Here indeed all parties meet together and are substantially agreed, though not without interesting variation in point of view and proportion of component parts. To determine the central truth embodied in the picture we have simply to regard it as a whole and from a sufficient distance. It is evident that the sovereign aim of the artist, from first to last, is to throw into sharp relief an element in God's government of

the world, and an attribute of His character, by contrasting them with the startlingly antagonistic mood and conflicting action of the prophet. It is, therefore, only in a subordinate and indirect fashion that such doctrines emerge as God's providential lordship over all things, the resistlessness of His will, the grandeur and responsibility of the prophetic office, &c. Too narrow in conception, and negative in form, are such summaries of the teaching as that the story is a warning to the prophets against unfaithfulness, or an admonition to Israel against impenitence, or a vindication of the prophets against attack on the ground that some of their predictions had not been fulfilled.

An intelligent and sympathetic study of the book will, we think, justify the opinion that the ethical and religious purpose of the piece embraces the following points. Prophecy is remedial, designed not to destroy but to save, conditional therefore on human conduct, and so in the letter of its predictions may remain unfulfilled. In every nation and not in Israel alone, contrition and submission secure the divine pity and pardon. For God, the maker of all, loves what He has made, hates to destroy, and will seek to save to the uttermost. Israel's ultimate relation to the heathen is, therefore, one of compassionate endeavour to bring them also into the kingdom of God, for this is the will of God concerning them. That being so, it is evident how finely appropriate are Christ's references to Jonah.

The Jews, in their narrow-hearted particularism, hating Jesus for His embodiment in Himself and in His preaching of Israel's world-wide mission of redemption, demand of Him a sign. He answers that through their obstinacy and rebelliousness the story of Jonah shall be repeated in His person. As the prophet's repudiation of his saving mission handed him over to death, while his resumption of it restored him to life for its accomplishment, in like manner their rejection of Jesus' mission would produce His death and burial, while His loyal fidelity to it would secure His resurrection for its achievement. But, whereas the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, such is the hardness of their hearts, that they remain, and will continue to remain, obdurate to the ministry of One far mightier than the prophet of olden days. In the most profound sense, therefore, the story of Jonah is typical of the life and work of Jesus, while no book of the Old Testament more nearly approaches the breadth and depth of gospel universalism, and the grandeur of the New Testament conception of the fatherly love of God.

MICAH.

1. *Name and Birthplace of Micah.*—The sixth book of the minor prophets is described in the title as a collection of the teaching of the Judæan prophet Micah. In a reference to his work contained in the Book of Jeremiah, the name is written in a lengthier form as Micajah. It was a common name among the Hebrews, and occurs many times of various individuals in the Old Testament. There is a remarkable divergence in the spelling. The oldest and full form seems to have been Micahjahu, intended to express the central article of Jewish faith in the challenge, "Who is like Jehovah?" Some of the variations are probably eccentricities of spelling, and others contractions in familiar use. It is somewhat surprising not to find the full form in the title of the prophet's book, at all events if it is original or early.

He is distinguished as "the Morasthite," which is not a patronymic, but a designation of his birthplace. This was not, as some have supposed, the Mareshah, mentioned in i. 15, but Moresheth-gath (i. 14), an obscure hamlet in the western lowland of Judæa, bordering on the Philistine country. In Jerome's time the place was known in the vicinity of Eleutheropolis; it claimed the prophet's grave, and a Christian church was built over it. Details of his personal relations and career are found in Jewish and Christian traditions, but they are full of palpable blunders and deserve no credence. The confusion of our prophet with Micaiah, son of Imlah, who lived in the time of Ahab, is probably due to the fact that in the Hebrew text of 1 Kings xxii. 28 the opening words of this book are ascribed to the earlier prophet, but it is noteworthy that in the Septuagint (with the exception of one codex) the ascription is not found. The identification is of course baseless, and in the face of Micah's distinctive appellation as the Morasthite somewhat surprising.

2. *Mission and Date.*—Apart from the record of his prophecies we have but one absolutely authentic reminiscence of the life-work

of Micah. It is related in the twenty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah. The prophet of woes, at the bidding of God, had proclaimed the imminent destruction of the town and of the temple. Arraigned on a capital charge, he is saved by the intervention of certain elders. "Micah the Morasthite," say they, "prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest (Micah iii. 12). Did Hezekiah, king of Judah, and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them?"

The reference is of great interest. It shows us what a powerful influence was exerted by Micah at the court and in the capital. Further, it tells us that in the opinion of contemporaries and later generations his predictions of destruction were not fulfilled in the time or in the forms contemplated by the prophet, retribution having been averted by repentance. Finally, it gives us a definite date for one, and that the chief oracle in his book, for the passage (iii. 12) is quoted exactly as it stands, and it may fairly be counted the keystone of the whole.

A reasonable inference would be that the entire contents belong to the reign of Hezekiah, and, since the fall of Samaria is contemplated as proximate, to the opening years of it. On the other hand, the title assigns to the prophet a more prolonged period of activity, extending over the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In support of this statement various references and descriptions in the book are instanced as relevant to the times of the first-named kings, but wholly inconsistent with the government of Hezekiah. The historical records do not paint for us the actual state of things with sufficient definiteness to allow of this kind of evidence having much weight, while a similar train of reasoning would tend to show that chapters vi.—vii. belong to the monarchy of Manasseh. Nor can much be made of the passage in chapter iv. (verses 1—4), which appears likewise in the second chapter of Isaiah, a prophecy spoken probably in the age of Ahaz. For though Micah's version is the fuller, the probability is that neither borrows from the other, but that a famous prediction of an earlier seer has been incorporated in the personal utterance of both.

In all likelihood the title does not intend to assign the reigns of the three kings as the period during which Micah's book was gradually composed, but rather as the era in which his prophetic activity fell, and that in large, general terms, that should exhibit

him as belonging to the later portion of the epoch, which includes Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. The great manifesto mentioned in Jeremiah may have been the culmination of a protracted career, and in it he may have summed up the scattered elements and lines of his earlier prophetic teaching. To disentangle and date these in his memoir is a task rendered impossible by its summary and often enigmatic arrangement. Like many other records of prophecy, it is a condensation of speeches and predictions emitted on many and various occasions, and was probably put together during the first years of Hezekiah, perhaps on the particular occasion referred to in Jeremiah.

3. *Unity of the Book.*—Of recent years the unity of the book has been strongly questioned. If it is one continuous composition by the same pen, we are compelled to recognise several very abrupt transitions and enormous changes of scene. That is, nevertheless, a feature found in other prophecies, and any excess of it in Micah's style may be due to mental make, as in the case of Hosea, or perhaps to the fashion in which prophetic memoirs were compiled.

As the book stands there seems to be a formal division into three parts, viz., chapters i.—ii., iii.—v., vi.—vii., each section introduced by the invocation "Hear ye," starting with denunciation of sin, passing on into menaces of judgment, and ending with promise. In the first of these the element of threatening preponderates; in the second the promise is predominantly dwelt upon; while the third vindicates the justice, certainty, and inner meaning of the Divine dispensation. So far, then, the structure seems intelligible, consistent, and coherent. But it is pointed out that the promise at the end of the first section (ii. 12—13) comes in very abruptly and is embodied in two single verses. If these be removed then we get a more massive and simple division. For the denunciation of judgment rolls on unbroken through chapters i.—iii., while the background of promise fills the second act in chapters iv.—v. It is, therefore, suggested that the couple of interrupting verses did not stand in the original plan of the book. Either they were a marginal note that has crept into the text, or, belonging to some other point in the prophecy, they have somehow got misplaced.

The assumption is not of such consequence as to need discussion. A more important criticism is as to the origin of chapters vi.—vii. As we pass into them we are conscious of a distinct change of atmosphere. The tone is more subdued. The antagonisms present to the mind of the speaker are altered in character. Sin, social disorder, alienation from God are there, and in even aggravated degree; but the kind has changed. There is the

gloom of a reign of terror, an embittered religious scepticism, coupled with superstition and a corruption that has reached maturity. One thinks naturally of the reign of Manasseh, and so the passage is assigned to that time, whether written by Micah or a disciple. But there are not wanting explanations of these features of the section, not to mention the blank that would be left by its excision in the general plan of the book, and the element of uncertainty in all such reasoning.

If, however, the separation be justified we should probably carry it out a little further, and hold vii. 7—20, as contemporary with Isaiah xi.—lxvi., which it strikingly resembles in tone and thought. In chapters iv.—v. the leaps from threat to promise are peculiarly sudden. Various causes are suggested, and it is not impossible that the original draft may have been enlarged or annotated. But as it stands the difficulty of individual transitions is diminished by the appearance of a certain symmetrical arrangement, by which in succession the main elements of disaster, announced in iii. 12, are taken up, amplified, and made to pass into a picture of restoration and subsequent triumph.

A more practical question is, whether the reference to Babylon in iv. 10, is original, or is a subsequent explanation introduced into the text. It is urged that as Assyria is the threatening enemy the introduction of Babylon is irrelevant, and that it is Assyria over which renovated Israel is to triumph (v. 6). Besides, as we know from Jeremiah that the destruction which Micah anticipated was averted, how likely that the abiding principle of his prophecy should be adapted to later circumstances by himself or another. Further, as a proof of the possibility, we find that in the Greek text of the Septuagint there is introduced an extra reference to Babylon in iv. 8. On the contrary it is urged that as Babylon was a conquest of the Assyrian arms about that time, and as 2 Kings xvii. 24 and the inscriptions inform us that the populations of captured towns were often interchanged to diminish risk of revolt, the idea of captivity in Babylon is quite in place. If we omit the mention of Babylon, we get a simple but favourite thought of Micah, that only in the people's reduction to a primitive, uncorrupted life, stripped of luxury and military show, could they reach the retrieval of their lost hopes. The question is one to be settled on purely exegetical grounds, and quite apart from dogmatical prepossessions.

4. *Analysis of Contents.*—Passing from these formal questions we come to consider the contents of the book as it lies in our hands. The first great division (chapters i., ii.) summons the whole world to witness a Divine drama. Striding over the mountains, in the thunderstorm of Assyrian invasion, God is

advancing to chastise the sins of His people, which are concentrated in the idolatry and wickedness of the capitals. The first act in the tragedy is the destruction of Samaria, but the evil does not stop there; the desolating scourge sweeps on towards Jerusalem.

In a series of vivid pictures of the horrors of invasion, connected by word-play with the names of a number of provincial towns, the course and completeness of Judah's ruin are portrayed. Reverting to the authors of this impending judgment, he attacks the privileged and powerful classes for their fraudulent oppression of the poor and their merciless rapacity, threatening them with retributive humiliation and extirpation. Their sneer against himself and his God he retorts, defends the justice of Jehovah, once more pillories their heartless cruelties perpetrated on the weak and defenceless, declares the very land is sick of it, and must purge itself of them and their abominations, and taunts them with their besotted trust in lying prophets, that promise them physical prosperity in spite of moral wrong. Then in swift recoil from the dark prospect he turns to the brighter future beyond, and pictures the nation's restoration to God's favour, and to happy enjoyment of the land of promise.

The second division (chapters iii.—v.) travels over similar ground, only omitting all mention of Samaria, condensing the threatening, and expanding the delineation of promise. We have, first, an impassioned invective against the nobles and judges, who misuse power, pervert justice, grind down the indigent, and drive the needy to desperation. As they showed no mercy, they shall get none from God. Next he scathes with burning irony the hypocritical and venal tribe of prophets that support the corrupt chiefs, and threatens them with the confusion, ignominy, and ruin that must come on men whose action is based on external expediency, not founded on the eternal laws of truth and justice. Bursting into a conjoint denunciation of corrupt judges, priests, prophets, and nobles, who have built a splendid and luxurious capital out of the blood, and tears, and ruin of their country, the prophet reaches the climax of his burden in the terrible declaration that Zion the royal residence, Jerusalem the capital, and the Temple itself shall be laid in ruins and desolation.

With that a revulsion of feeling ensues. Starting with the crowning element of disaster, the seer beholds the restored Temple in unprecedented magnificence, accepted as the religious and moral centre of the world, exercising peaceful control over the people, while around it Israel dwells in safety, happy in repossession of more than its ancient Davidic empire. Reverting

again to the second element of disaster, the defeat and depopulation of the city, he describes the certainty that this calamity will be followed by restoration, and depicts the inviolable strength of the new community in a picture (that has a touch of the apocalyptic in it) of the nations gathered against Zion, dreaming of its destruction, but knowing not that God has brought them there for their utter overthrow, as to a threshing-floor for judgment.

A third time he catches up the sentence of doom, and, singling out the downfall of the monarchy, he predicts in stately language the advent of the ideal ruler of Israel, who, springing from the old Davidic cradle, and ruling in the strength and spirit of God, shall establish Israel, repel Assyria, and make the chosen people resistless among the nations, like a lion among sheep, and like showers that descend from God and do not depend on man. The section concludes with the thought that in this new era the purified Israel shall be purged of all sinful forms of worship and forbidden sources of moral support, as well as from all reliance in merely temporal resources and muniments of war. The nation shall derive its strength from God, and not from an arm of flesh.

The third section (chapters vi., vii.), counting it as an integral part of the book, is best construed as a less impassioned, more thoughtful, and somewhat apologetic confirmation of the necessity, justice, and inevitable issue of the imminent calamity. In structure it is exceedingly dramatic, falling constantly into dialogue, in which the speakers rapidly change.

The prophet opens a process before the everlasting mountains, and claims a hearing for Jehovah. God introduces His case with the demand, whether His loyalty to the covenant with Israel has in any point faltered, or furnished ground for their disloyalty. Responding to the appeal, the people offer compensation and amendment in the form of sacrifices, even of their first-born. This offer the prophet rejects indignantly, pointing out that nothing but moral and religious regeneration will suffice. Jehovah takes up the plea, and points out that with all their multiplied ceremonial observances their private, commercial, and political life is full of dishonesty and violence; that undeterred by common chastisements they persist in their iniquities; and that, therefore, a righteous God cannot accept them, nor exempt them from destruction. Further, the faintest hope of real repentance is exhibited as impossible in the picture of one searching vainly for a good man amid this corrupt society, in which the most sacred ties of affection have lost all binding force, and which must dissolve of its own rottenness. But even in this

uttermost darkness there is light. Affliction exerts its remedial power. A new and better spirit awakes in smitten Israel—of humility, penitence, longing to atone and regain God's favour. Gradually assurance that God's purpose cannot be frustrated, though it may be delayed, supervenes. The Divine voice is heard promising restoration and a more glorious future than ever the past has known.

And so the book ends in an exquisite prayer of trustful desire, and a magnificent confession of faith in the transcendency of God in His attributes of mercy and of truth.

5. *Literary and Moral Characteristics.*—The teaching of Micah possesses remarkable qualities both in style and thought. His language is vigorous, graphic, and varied. At times he is emotional and pathetic, anon terse and trenchant, and again elevated and sublime, as the occasion and subject demand. He does not quite command the grand style of Isaiah, but he is more sharply telling and direct. In width of survey and weight of movement he differs from his great contemporary, somewhat as a tribune of the people or a preacher of righteousness differs from a statesman of the first order.

It is singular that Micah takes no notice of foreign policy, never mentions the rival Assyrian and Egyptian parties at court, nor deals in any way with questions of state; but he burns with indignation against the eviction of the peasants from their small holdings, and is moved by the social wrongs and inhumanities of the time in a fashion that forces us to feel he must himself have been a man of the people, and probably a resident in a district peculiarly exposed to those forms of evil that were breaking up the old happy, simple life of primitive Israel. Against such actual iniquities and injuries to Jehovah's people his polemic is mainly directed, though he clearly recognises that they have their origin in disloyalty to the nation's Divine Head, and the spirit of His true religion. In this he resembles Amos, but his conception of right is a more deeply ethical one, as is also his thought of the tie between Israel and Jehovah. It is indeed a very profound and noble idea that is embodied in the picture of the pleading in chapter vi., and in the aspect of the covenant that is there put forward. The personal and moral so completely predominate over the merely juridical and legal.

The Messianic idea of Micah is a remarkably developed one, though he has not fully worked out the process by which it is to be reached. For its basis he takes the idealised picture of the heroic, happy, united empire of King David, in which the corruption, extremes of wealth and poverty, foreign humiliation, and internal miseries of the present age were unknown. His vision

is that of the kingdom of God, though clothed in earthly forms, and cramped by temporal limitations. Its foundations are justice, mercy, and the fear of God; its destiny world-wide dominion; and the issue peace, prosperity, and righteousness. The whole bright dream centres round a kingly figure that emerges from the eternal purposes of God, after the flesh of Bethlehem origin like David, but clothed with attributes and powers Divine. No wonder that in many features of the story of Jesus of Nazareth we catch echoes of the Book of Micah, all along that pathway of glory and of shame that stretches from the cradle of Bethlehem to the agony of Gethsemane and the cross of Calvary.

NAHUM.

1. *Meaning of Name.*—The place assigned to Nahum in the succession of the minor prophets is the same in the Hebrew Bible and in the Septuagint. Nor after this point is there any divergence in the arrangement of the books that follow. The order is identical in the Massoretic canon and in the Greek, the oldest of the versions. The word Nahum probably means the comforter, and in conformity with the name the prophet's oracle is a message of consolation. In form it is an impassioned anticipation of the destruction of Assyrian Nineveh, the oppressor of God's people, but its inner motive is an undying faith in God's redemptive purpose, and its destination to comfort the heart of Israel well-nigh sick with hope so long deferred.

2. *The Prophet's Personality.*—Of Nahum we know nothing except what we can gather from his book. The name was probably not uncommon, though no other person bears it in the Old Testament. There is a Nahum among the ancestors of Joseph (Luke iii. 25); our prophet is mentioned in the apocryphal books of Esdras; and the name possibly appears in the inscriptions of Phœnician origin. In the title prefixed to the prophecy Nahum is called "the Elkoshite." From the form of the word this cannot be a patronymic. It might indicate a family stem, but none such appears in the Hebrew lists. It may be taken as certain that it is meant to designate the prophet's native place or his residence. Unfortunately we have no reference elsewhere in the Bible to any Elkosh. The very pronunciation is uncertain. In the Septuagint it is written "Elkesite." Yet this phrase is all we have to go upon in determining the personal circumstances of the seer.

At a comparatively early period tradition located Elkosh in Galilee. Jerome tells us that he was shown as the prophet's birthplace a small village with traces of the ruins of ancient buildings, which the Jews believed to be the place of Nahum's nativity. If the concluding statement rests on Jerome's own knowledge, then there must attach to the tradition more weight

than if it depended merely on the obliging zeal of a guide. The most likely identification of the site is with El-Kauzeh, which lies a few miles south-west of Tiberias, in the vicinity of Ramah in Naphtali. The suggestion is ingenious, but devoid of any material proof, that Elkosh is to be recognised in the Capernaum of the New Testament, whose name means village of Nahum, for supposing the interpretation correct there is nothing to show that it was called after the prophet and not after another Nahum. There are some other early references to Elkosh, but they are vague and add nothing to our knowledge.

If the prophet's birthplace were, indeed, in the north, his family must have either escaped the general deportation of the inhabitants by Sargon, or else he may have been as a child among the exiles, and in that case uttered his oracle against Nineveh in the land of his banishment. On the other supposition, it is most likely that his family moved southwards, and that his prophetic activity was in Judea. A strong point is made against the whole theory of a Galilean origin by appeal to the protest of the Jews, who in Christ's time were already zealous builders of the prophets' tombs (Matt. xxiii. 29), that "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John vii. 52).

A conflicting tradition as to the prophet's place of abode dates back to the sixteenth century, but unhappily for its credibility no farther. At Alkosh, a considerable village on the left bank of the Tigris, two days' journey north of the ruins of Nineveh, the tomb of the prophet is shown, and to this day is reverenced by devout Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan pilgrims. But the tomb, the house in which it stands, and the whole place are destitute of any traces or marks of genuine antiquity. And in the twelfth century, according to Benjamin of Tudela, the synagogue of Nahum was in Mosul, and his tomb at Ain-Japhata, in Babylonia. Moreover, even if he did live in some part of the Assyrian realm, the fact might be stated in the title of his book, but a Hebrew prophet would hardly describe himself or be described as the native of a foreign place (compare Ezek. i. 3). So far then the historical evidence is against an Assyrian Elkosh, but it must also be allowed that the proof of a Galilean Elkosh is not convincing. We must, therefore, seek light in another direction, and resolve the geographical question into a larger and more interesting one.

3. *Local Colour.*—A writing is apt to reflect the surroundings of its author. This is especially true, if it deal not with abstract principles but with places, persons, and practical movements. Of this nature is the oracle of Nahum against Nineveh. Its structure, its address, or some one of its many details ought to betray

its origin, and prove it to have been composed either in Palestine or Assyria. The expectation is a natural one, but experiment proves it not quite satisfactory. Study of the contents and form of the book does not lead to one conclusion. Each side of the alternative is stoutly maintained by competent scholars. It is urged that Nahum must have lived in the neighbourhood of Nineveh, for that great metropolis dominates all his thought, engrosses his attention, is described with a knowledge of topography and local colour possible only to an eye-witness, intrudes into the writer's vocabulary, and interests him in its fortunes as no remote city known only by hearsay could have done. On the contrary, Judah is but cursorily mentioned, and the reference is seen to be that of a speaker far away when it is compared with the parallel allusion to Assyria of a prophet in Judæa (Zeph. ii. 13—15).

There is truth in some of this characterization, but it seems twisted to a wrong conclusion. The prophecy is indeed engrossed in Nineveh, but in the realisation of Nineveh's destruction, and in Nineveh's destruction conceived as Judæa's deliverance. The reference to Judæa is not, therefore, correctly described as a passing allusion, but is the central address of the whole impassioned vision, placed therefore in the climax of the utterance, and forming the crown and keystone of the structure. That is not what it would have been if the writer had been an exile addressing his fellow-exiles. It is the appeal of a prophet in Judæa speaking to the heart of Judæa, stirred not by the woes of his banished brethren, but by the crippling wounds and desolations of the mother country bereft of her children (i. 13—ii. 2).

If local colour is to be appealed to, we have the citation of Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon (i. 4), and would no doubt have more Palestinian tints were Nineveh not our author's theme. There are in his book at most two or three Assyrian words, and these—we can see from other Old Testament books—such as an author in Palestine might naturally know and use in writing of Assyrian affairs. If the topographical references, the detailed touches, and the graphic realism of the delineation of the taking and destruction of Nineveh are held decisive of personal knowledge, the same conclusion would attach to the author's minute and vivid picture of the physical surroundings, material resources, military strength, and terrible overthrow of Egyptian Thebes (iii. 8—10). The truth is that the appearance of detail is due, not only here, but in other elements of the piece, not to observation, but to a powerful and picturesque imagination, operating on information concerning Nineveh possessed by all the peoples interested by conquest in the capital of their conqueror. There is, in fact,

a remarkable absence of names of localities, persons (Huzzab is erroneous, ii. 7), and events, such as would colour the composition of a writer actually on the spot. The argument is, of course, too much one of personal literary instinct to be made much of, but the trend of critical opinion is certainly against assigning to Nahum an Assyrian home and career.

4. *Contemporary History.*—The period of the prophet's activity is not specified in the superscription. It must be gleaned, as nearly as we can, from the contents of the prophecy. Till recent years our knowledge of events was not such as to permit of any one certain combination. There was, therefore, a very wide divergence of opinion as to the probable date, ranging from the beginning to the end of the seventh century. The three most respectable theories locate the composition respectively under Hezekiah (about B.C. 700), under Manasseh (about B.C. 660), under Josiah (about B.C. 630).

In the light of fresh discoveries opinion gravitates to the middle date. This conclusion might have been arrived at from a thorough study of the character of the book. Israel lies bound and helpless in the grasp of Assyria (i. 13); half of her people, the northern kingdom, has been emptied out (ii. 2); through her midst the wicked one has passed (i. 15), and Judah is left broken and despoiled (ii. 2). If the description is general, it would apply to Israel at any time subsequent to the terrible invasion of Sennacherib during the reign of Hezekiah. If it indicates a particular calamity it most probably refers to that disaster. If a later experience must be found, it is possible to fall back on the narrative in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, which speaks of a captivity of Manasseh, that must have been the act either of Esarhaddon (B.C. 680 ?), or of Assurbanipal (B.C. 648). Several phrases in the wording (i. 11, 12, 14, 15; ii. 13) resemble, really or seemingly, features of the narrative of Sennacherib's invasion in Kings and Isaiah. But the similarity comes far short of proving the combination, while even if this be the reference it does not follow that the passage is contemporaneous. Such a crisis of terror, permanent crippling, and national depression would live fresh and ever present in the people's mind till they were either retrieved, or by still worse calamities eclipsed.

Nothing, therefore, shuts us up to Hezekiah's age, while there is something that irresistibly demands a later era. One of the most outstanding pictures in the book is the delineation of the overthrow of No-Amon, *i.e.* Thebes on the Nile. From an early date there had been hostility between Egypt and Assyria, and such a disaster might have happened at any time, say, under Sargon or Sennacherib, to tally with the theory of early origin.

But the inscriptions have decided the matter by giving us a definite account of the capture and spoliation of Thebes by the army of Assurbanipal about B.C. 662. No doubt the great city may have been sacked at an earlier period, but coupled with other evidence we have a moral certainty that Nahum wrote subsequent to that date.

Turning now to the theory that he wrote long subsequent to this period, about the year B.C. 630, we find that the only argument for it is the prejudice, that the impulse and basis of Nahum's prediction must be found in an actual menace to the existence of Nineveh, such as did exist about that time in the hostile movements of the Medes and Babylonians, while earlier than this date the Assyrian empire was in the meridian of its might and glory. But the supposition is mistaken from first to last. If anything is manifest in Nahum's prophecy, it is that his certainty of Nineveh's overthrow is not a political forecast but a religious inspiration. It is a deduction from the eternal laws of justice and divine grace, not an inference from an historical survey of existing facts. The actual executioner is God, and there is not the faintest indication of the earthly agents. Moreover, his picture is not of a decaying Assyria that has already received its death-blow, but of an Assyria in the plenitude of its power and arrogance, gorged with the plunder of wars and the profit of the world's commerce, defiant alike of men and of God (i. 12, ii. 13—14; iii. 15—17). It is precisely that, the apparent invincibility of the heathen world power, that inspires the Hebrew prophet to his daring flight of faith. Just when sight and reason and probability are most adverse to hope, then is religion's opportunity, then is faith's hour to be certain in spite of sense, then is prophecy needed to comfort and assure the heart of God's people.

If this be the true genesis of prophecy, if this be the law of its origination and action, what season more suitable to assert the reality of the world's Divine government and to declare Nineveh's certain doom than just in the hour of its supreme triumph, when over the ruin of its great rival Egypt it stood the unchallenged mistress of the world? Either then, in connection perchance with Manasseh's disaster, or some time later, if that calamity did not fall so early, the heart of Nahum was roused to indomitable confidence in coming deliverance, his spirit was stirred with an irresistible certainty of slow but sure retribution of old wrongs, and in thoughts that glowed and words that burned he chanted the death dirge of the world's colossal oppressor. With all but complete assurance we may place Nahum about the middle of the seventh century. Earlier we have no right to locate him, not indeed any moral or religious inducement. Later he could

hardly have written our prophecy, for by the time of Nineveh's last struggles Assyria had ceased to be an object of either menace or hatred to Judea.

5. *Character of the Book.*—The oracle of Nahum is one continuous utterance, not to be broken into separate elements, but the embodiment of a single inspiration, forceful, rounded, and complete. Every attempt to dismember it is a failure. Its unity and genuineness are acknowledged on all hands. Only the first part of the superscription has been questioned. But there is nothing unnatural in the title assigning, correctly, first the subject of the prophecy, and then its author. The piece is of the nature of a highly poetical and imaginative composition, is indeed an inspired vision. Clearly cut divisions can hardly be marked out, but it is probable that eight stages may be detected in the stately march of the seer's conception.

Over against the Assyrian power with its gigantic pagan might he sees God, the vindicator of right, the avenger of wrong, the final judge of all human issues. Slow to strike, because He is so strong, He is nevertheless relentlessly just. He wields the powers of the air, commands the waters, controls the soil, makes the solid earth tremble, and rules among men omnipotent, resistless (i. 2—6). This God, faithful to friends, fearful to foes, annihilating the most formidable resistance, has been thwarted and defied by Assyria, and therefore will utterly destroy her (i. 7—12). Judah, so long oppressed, shall be set free by the Divine overthrow of the Assyrian, and already may rejoice in the happy release, for sure alike are the downfall of the foe and the restoration of crippled Israel (i. 13; ii. 2). The taking of the city is now depicted before our eyes, with lightning-like rapidity, in a series of vivid pictures of the muster of the contending forces, the assault, the sudden collapse of the defences, the seizure of the palace, the capture and flight of the inhabitants (ii. 3—8). Next comes the sack and pillage of the wealthy city, the emptiness and sickening desolation, the weird contrast with the time when it was like a great lion's den gorged with the plunder of its devastating armies, for God has risen against her and made an utter end of her might, her wealth, and her empire, that were gathered and built up out of bloodshed and violence unending (ii. 9; iii. 1).

Once again the seer calls up in living images the din and terror of the conflict, and the fatal completeness of the defeat, and figuring the heartless capital as a cruel courtezan, that has devoured the fortunes and lives of the nations, he exults in the terrible humiliation of her haughtiness, and the contumely and implied shame of her overthrow (iii. 2—7). By the example of her own destruction of mighty Thebes, the royal residence of her

great rival Egypt, he asserts the possibility of the catastrophe, and founds its certainty on her impotence in the hour of need, the fall of her fortresses, the demoralisation of her soldiers, and the failure and destruction of her last defences (iii. 8—13). Finally he taunts her with her helplessness, pictures the destruction of her commerce, the scattering of her potentates, the dispersion of her populace, and the relief and rejoicing that her fall will create in all nations, for wide as the world has been the curse of her oppression (iii. 14—19).

6. *Literary and Religious Features.*—Among the prophetic writers of the Old Testament Nahum, brief as his book is, claims high rank in respect of literary excellence. By general consent he is counted a master of Hebrew style. His vocabulary includes some peculiar words and exceptional forms. But what has sometimes been reckoned Galilean provincialism or the betrayal of a late or deteriorating style, is more probably the result of defective copying. Identities of phrase and idea may be traced between his book and several other prophetic writers, but this, when used to determine age or originality in favour of one author rather than another, is apt to prove a two-edged sword. For fiery vigour, glowing colour, dramatic impressiveness, wealth of imagination, and pictorial imagery, Nahum stands pre-eminent. He is, as it were, hurried away by his own passion, and has not time to do more than sketch his vividly conceived pictures in a few daring strokes. Perhaps all the more on that account his delineation seems to actually live and move and make itself heard with the real clash of arms, and hurry of panic-stricken feet, and the awful hush of ruin and desolation.

As to the prophet's rank in the series of inspired teachers, it is suggested that his message is meagre, and his conceptions narrow. He has nothing to say about Israel's Messianic character and future. He has no rebuke for her sinfulness and unworthiness. His soul is consumed with unreasoning indignation against Assyria, and he is devoid of that lofty conception of the world's government which enabled earlier prophets to recognise in Assyria Jehovah's scourge for His people's stubbornness and the chastening rod of His gracious discipline. In contrast to that large and religious interpretation of providence, Nahum appears as the representative of a retrogression into narrow, national particularism. Now it is to be admitted that the form of Nahum's oracle lends itself to this misreading, but the spirit and aim of the prophet ought to have prevented it. Besides the wrong of Israel, more than once in his short utterance he presents Assyria as the oppressor of mankind, whose avenger Jehovah is (iii. 4, 7, 19). Nor even in the contemplation of his own people's injuries is the

prophet's zeal national and vindictive. It is not revenge but righteousness that demands the transgressor's downfall. It is not Israel's pride that is at stake but God's honour, not the redemption of his people but the vindication of his God that is in question. With Nahum Nineveh's punishment is the guarantee of the world's Divine government, and his impassioned declaration of its downfall is the measure not of his hostility to it but of the struggle and triumph of his faith in God and in God's kingdom. That being the single and simple issue present to his mind, he naturally does not even touch that aspect of the Assyrian enigma which explains its evil power over God's people and the world by their sinful failure to be what God would have had them be for their own happiness and humanity's good.

Thus his oracle is essentially though not superficially Messianic. How could it be otherwise with a prophet who has a conception of God so morally and spiritually majestic? For the rest it is needless to remark that the faith of Nahum was not falsified. Improbable as it seemed to earthly reason in the height of Assyria's prosperity, that the great empire should within half a century crumble to pieces, and that the splendid capital with its titanic military strength and its vast commerce, standing as it did on the great highway between east and west, should be not merely deprived of its supremacy, but captured and destroyed and obliterated by fire and water and time, till the very place of it was forgotten, this—mad as it looked when Nahum foretold it—has in the complete fulness of its terror come true, and may be read not only in the pages of history, but still more graphically in the calcined, weather-worn relics of Nineveh's long vanished greatness, that have been laid bare in the recently discovered and partially disinterred ruins of the ancient Assyrian capital.

HABAKKUK.

1. *Name and Identity.*—The name of Habakkuk is peculiar in form, and is borne by no other person in the Old Testament. The question has been raised whether it is originally a personal or a symbolical designation. Probably it is derived from a root meaning *to embrace*, and is variously interpreted to signify *the beloved one*, or *the wrestler*, or *the comforter*. Taking the last suggestion, Luther founds on it a finely felt characterization, which admirably expresses the spirit of the prophet's message, if not the etymology of the name. What Habakkuk does in his prophecy is, he says, "to caress his people and take them in his arms; that is to say, he comforts and cheers them, as one caresses a poor weeping child or fellow-creature, that it may be hushed and contented, because it shall soon, if God will, be better." Recently the name of the seer has been connected in its Greek form with an Assyrian word *hambakuku*, the name of a plant. In the Septuagint Habakkuk is written Ambakum, a form derived from a Hebrew original pronounced Habbakuk, the double b resolving itself into mb, and the harsh final k being changed by assonance into m. Similar changes appear in Bab-el-mandel for Bab-el-mandeb, and, perhaps, in Beelzebul for Beelzebub.

If our conjectures about the name are somewhat uncertain, it is unfortunate that our information about the prophet's person is still more vague. In the superscription of the book there is no recital of his ancestry, such as we have in the case of Zephaniah, not even a patronymic or reference to his birthplace, and, worst of all, no statement of the period when he emitted his propheey. On the other hand, he is formally designated *the prophet* (i. 1), as is also done in the titles to the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Though the word is used in the New Testament with a wider range of application, it is nowhere in the Old Testament appended to the name of any one whose proper function and profession was not strictly the prophetic office.

Therefore, although we have only one short composition from Habakkuk, and that apparently composed to be read, not orally delivered, we may safely think of the author as one whose life was devoted to the ministry of prophecy. The concluding division of his book is a poem, provided with metrical or musical directions and notes, exactly similar to those used in the Psalter, and clearly indicating that the piece was set to be sung with musical accompaniment in the Temple worship. From the phrase, *on my stringed instruments*, used in the terminal instruction (iii. 19), it is held that he was a Levite, and occupied some office in connection with the service of praise. This belief finds either a dubious confirmation, or more likely an ancient echo, in the statement inserted in the superscription of the story of Bel and the Dragon in the version of the Septuagint in Origen's "Tetrapla," that Habakkuk was "the son of Joshua, of the tribe of Levi." It is very far from certain that the Temple choir and orchestra consisted of Levites alone, and eminently unlikely at this early date.

A very similar statement terminates the poem ascribed to Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 20) on occasion of his miraculous recovery from a sickness that seemed to be unto death. Moreover, the acknowledged state of the Hebrew text suggests hesitation in building large inferences on such a small basis as the letter which represents the pronoun. Nor would dogmatism be prudent in view of the possibility that the musical setting of this magnificent poem does not date back to its first publication, but was the outcome of a later and liturgical desire to make devotional use of an expression of faith and hope men would not willingly let die, or leave unused in times of national need. Besides these vague possibilities, there is no further biographical matter to be gleaned in the pages of the prophecy. Tradition, Jewish and Christian, has plenty to tell us, but it is either, for the most part, allegory and devout fancy, or baseless and sometimes manifestly false legend. For instance, he was employed to convey food in a miraculous fashion to Daniel in the lions' den. He was son of the lady of Shunem, to whom Elisha promised that she should *embrace* a son (2 Kings iv. 16); or, again, the watchman set (Isa. xxi. 6) to look out for tokens of the fall of Babylon. He was born at Bethzocher, removed before the destruction of Jerusalem to Ostracine, died two years prior to the return of the exiles, and was buried at Keilah, in Judah, or, according to another tradition, at Chukkok, in Naphtali. The human mind does not willingly accept the principle, that, where we have not knowledge, the fact of ignorance is better than the pretence of information.

2. *Date.*—The date of the prophecy cannot be fixed with precision. Neither in the book, nor anywhere else in the Old Testament, have we any statement on the point, nor any historical allusion sufficiently detailed to enable us to draw a positive conclusion. But while minute definition is out of the question, we can say with much certainty that the book belongs to the closing decades of the seventh century, which witnessed the decline and fall of the Assyrian empire. For in its pages Nineveh has vanished and Babylon takes possession of the stage. Indeed we may almost venture to affirm that the event which dominates the thought and emotion of the book is precisely the imposing spectacle of the transference of the world's sovereignty from the capital on the Tigris to the mighty city of the Euphrates. The problem of the prophecy is the part to be played in the fortunes of mankind, and especially the influence to be exerted on Israel's career, by this new, terrible, and unexpected arbiter of human destiny. In the absence of indisputable statements, the book has had dates assigned to it ranging over more than a century, but reasonable conjectures concentrate themselves within the period indicated.

Three theories hold the field at the present moment, though the issue promises to lie between the second and third. The book belongs either to the close of Manasseh's reign (B.C. 650—640), or to the time of Josiah's great reform (B.C. 630—620), or to the early years of Jehoiakim (B.C. 608—600). To decide between these rival opinions quite a number of considerations are adduced, of which many are indecisive, a few possess some weight, but none is quite conclusive. Jewish tradition, which assigns the book to the age of Manasseh, amounts to nothing. Neither does its place in the canon determine anything. The fact that the prophecy terminates in a hymn, prepared and arranged to be rendered musically in the Temple worship, is held to exclude the times of Manasseh and Jehoiakim, and to indicate the era of Josiah's reformation. But, not to rest upon the reform ascribed to Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 15—16), the worship of Jehovah, though corrupted, was not abolished in either period, and, as has already been pointed out, the musical setting of Habakkuk's poem is hardly a satisfactory basis for argument about the author's age, any more than about his personal circumstances. A line of proof has been led, with a good deal of confidence, founded on certain similarities of idea and wording between Habakkuk and other prophets. The chief passages adduced are these. It is argued that Hab. ii. 20 is the model of Zeph. i. 7, and that Jer. iv. 13, v. 6, are echoes of Hab. i. 8. Now these passages, of which Habakkuk is held to be the original,

belong to the prophecies promulgated during the days of Josiah, in all likelihood in the opening years of his reform. This would seem to exclude the Jehoiakim date, and between the two earlier it would rather favour the Manasseh theory, in whose time, moreover, we are told that prophets pronounced just such oracles of evil as this (2 Kings xxi. 10—15).

But of late years, reasoning based on assumed literary relationship has been gravely discredited, and in the present case the evidence is slight and far from sufficient to establish either priority, or the bare fact of actual indebtedness, while if Manasseh's age had its harbingers of doom, there were certainly as many in the later decades of this fateful century (Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Huldah, &c.). Against a very early date it is urged, that by his use of the phrase *in your days* (i. 5), the prophet fixes the Chaldean invasion within the lifetime of his own generation, and as he addresses not the infants but the adults of his time, that allows us an interval of not more than twenty or thirty years between prediction and fulfilment. That this is a fair estimate seems clear from passages of a similar description (Joel i. 2; Jer. xvi. 9; Ezek. xii. 25). The time of Manasseh is, therefore, put out of the question, and we must date our prophecy not earlier than B.C. 630. Fault can hardly be found fairly with this logic by those whose theory of prophecy permits them to reason from the historical fulfilment back to the announcement. But apart from definitely timed predictions, such a line of reasoning seems at least precarious in the light of ascertained facts, and in view of the subordinate place expressly assigned to the element of time in the delivery of prophecy (1 Peter i. 11).

At the same time, if the argument is questionable in form, the conclusion is probably sound. Certainly the prophet's use of the phrase proves that he felt the disaster of Judæa imminent, as he equally clearly presents the downfall of Babylon in the remote future (ii. 3). A clue might have been hoped for from the picture of Judah's condition in i. 2—4. If the violence, lawlessness, and paralysis of justice refer, as some hold, not without plausible grounds (compare i. 13; ii. 4, 8, 17), to injuries inflicted by the Chaldeans, then clearly chapters ii. and iii. depict accomplished facts, and we must date our prophecy in the time of Jehoiakim, and late in his reign rather than early. But the majority of interpreters are agreed that the verses in question depict internal corruptions, not external injuries, and that all that follows is future, is indeed the punitive sequel of present sin.

This is in all likelihood the true scope of the passage, and it deprives it of any defining value, for the dark picture is applicable to periods in the reigns of each of the three monarchs in

question. It does, perchance, tell against the second reformed section of Josiah's reign, but it would be quite compatible with the long years of bitter and only half-successful struggle to introduce and establish the royal programme of religious reform and rectification of old abuses. The most significant indication of date is the fashion in which Habakkuk presents the Chaldeans as a new and unfamiliar power on the stage of western history (i. 5—11). His graphic portrait may of course be thrown into its peculiar form solely for artistic reasons, but the impression remains that it reflects an actual novelty of the people portrayed. That being so, we must not date our book later than the opening of Jehoiakim's reign. The prophet further speaks of the Chaldean tide of conquest as a thing marvellous, unexpected, and hardly to be believed.

We must take care not to push the wording of prophetic oratory too far, and it is, therefore, hardly a legitimate inference to count this language as conclusive against the later date. It may be admitted that it is most perfectly explicable, if we have to do with the era of Josiah's reform, but it might quite well be used at any time prior to the great battle of Carchemish. During the years of Assyria's decline under the attacks of the Medes and Chaldeans, its hold on the West had relaxed, and Judea had begun to breathe freely, to recover materially, and to dream of freedom. But Egypt also had meantime revived and begun to dream of empire. Thus at the time when Nineveh fell, not Babylon, but Egypt was Judæa's dread, as it marched northwards to attack its old enemy Assyria (2 Kings xxiii. 29). Hence the disastrous interference of Josiah, and the defeat of Megiddo. On, therefore, to the crushing defeat of Egypt by the Chaldeans at Carchemish (B.C. 605), it must have appeared to Judæa that the empire of the world belonged to the near and dreaded Colossus of the West, and not to the new unproved power in the far East. The language of Habakkuk may have been naturally employed at any time up to that decisive conflict, but not subsequent to it, for that would be to blindly treat a flight of inspired imagination as if it were a cold, artificial piece of political logic. The prophecy of Habakkuk is an intuition, not an argument; an impassioned achievement of religious faith, not a statesman's calculated forecast.

We are thus left uncertain between the dates of Josiah's reform and Jehoiakim's accession to the throne. A decision on external grounds seems to be impossible, but a personal verdict may be reached according to the impression we form of the dominant mood and ultimate motive of the book. If we detect in it the impatient grief of a noble reform delayed, foiled, or at

least paralysed by obdurate resistance, driving the prophet in despair to look for an external, punitive, Divine solution, then we shall picture to ourselves the prophecy born out of the aspirations, struggles, and disappointments of Josiah's early attempts at reformation. If, on the contrary, we feel ourselves in contact with the disheartenment of a man who looks back at the ruins of a brief but promising period of internal reform and national prosperity, and looks forward with dismay to a future of darker threatening than ever before, and in his extremity cries to God for light in the great darkness, we shall in that case place Habakkuk among the faithful hearts whose fate it was to behold the bright promise of Josiah's reign quenched in the gloom of his untimely death, and to witness the reversal by Jehoiakim of all his righteous and beneficent reforms. Between these poles opinions will continue to oscillate, but that somewhere within their limits (B.C. 630—600) fall the activity and authorship of Habakkuk, is a conviction that promises to secure the common consent of modern scholarship.

3. *Analysis of Contents.*—An unusually clear and continuous line of thought may be discerned running through this prophecy. There are three chief divisions. We have, first, the Divine design to raise up the Chaldean empire as a scourge for men's sins (i.); second, its ultimate overthrow and replacement by God's kingdom (ii.); third, the certainty of this happy issue in the grandeur of the Divine nature (iii.). These ruling ideas are worked out in the following fashion. The seer, confronted by the spectacle of violence, corruption, and injustice, obdurate and incurable, demands almost passionately the Divine intervention (i. 1—4). God answers by announcing speedy chastisement in the Chaldean career of conquest, rude, resistless, unmerciful, and finally sacrilegious (i. 5—11). Awed and sadly the prophet accepts the necessity of the Chaldean discipline, but his sense of the repugnance between God's holy nature and the brutality of the scourge He employs convinces him instinctively that Babylonian conquest is not God's last word in the world's story, and so he asks for further light (i. 12—17).

Waiting thus on Divine guidance he receives and is ordered to record a vision of the developments of time (ii. 1—3). Doubt as to the issue is destroyed in the assurance that the future belongs to the righteous who possess God in living faith, not to the godless tyranny which, unrestrained by principle, shall be driven by lust of conquest, as by love of drink, to excess that breeds its own ruin. This law of history is expanded in five woes, of which the first shows how oppression creates insurrection, the second how ill-gotten gains turn against its owner, the

third enunciates the futility of all godless civilisation, the fourth the demoralising effect on tyrants of an immoral rule, and the last finds the root of the ruin in the impossibility of building up an abiding social order on aught save the knowledge and obedience of the living God (ii. 4—20). This course of thought has brought the seer to recognise in the nature of God the final solution of all problems, and has stirred his spirit to an intense realisation of the Divine presence in all human affairs past, present, future. He beholds God, as in the days of old, emerging from the world unseen, marching gloriously through the earth, bending nature, nations, history to His majestic designs, righting all wrongs, overturning every oppression, annihilating the most formidable resistance, and triumphantly establishing his kingdom on earth. In the splendour of that certainty of faith the prophet can possess his soul in patience, and already, even amid the collapse of all earthly props and solaces, he will rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (iii. 1—19).

4. *Literary and Ethical Character.*—The Book of Habakkuk is beyond most prophecies a work of art, finely planned and exquisitely articulated, in which every part is organically connected with the rest, and has its proper place in the natural and vital progression of thought and emotion. The genuineness has scarcely been questioned, though quite recently an attempt has been made to detach the last four woes and the poem, and to ascribe these to post-Exilic times. The intimate unity of the book has not, however, been so universally recognised. Various sections of it have been assigned to various points in the prophet's career. The motive has been the exigency of theory of date, and it has not been perceived that what made dismemberment easy should have made it impossible to a true critical instinct, to wit, that perfect articulation and finish of individual part which is the most absolute proof of organic unity in the whole. In truth, the very part that superficially seems most detached and separable —the terminal poem—is most vitally connected and essential. For the last words of the woe on Babylon anticipate just such a theophany as is presented in the poem, and that gathers up in itself precisely the two unharmonized notes in the prophecy—the perplexed pain at the thought of Israel's renewed humiliation, the comforting reassurance of her enemy's ultimate overthrow, takes them up, gives them unrivalled emotional expression, hushes them in the overmastering conception of God's majestic sovereignty of history, and so blends their harmonies and discords in the unison of an awed but absolute reliance in the strength and goodness of Jehovah.

The style is distinguished by graphic imagery, dramatic pre-

sentation, vivid description, rare lyrical beauty, and sublime conception. The combination of minute artistic workmanship with undiminished power and freshness is specially notable in the poem and in the rhythmic structure of the woes in the second chapter. There are several peculiar words, and the text is probably defective in a few passages, particularly in the psalm. It is natural to assume that the prophecy was prepared not for oral delivery but for written publication (ii. 2). Indeed it is so subjective in tone, and has such affinity with psalms of spiritual conflict, such as the seventy-third, that one is tempted to doubt whether it was in its initiation planned for the nation, and is not rather the unrestrained utterance of a personal soul-struggle for faith and hope in a time of heart-breaking darkness.

The prophetic contents of the book hardly need comment. Contrary to human expectation Jerusalem did fall before Babylon, and later on that mighty empire succumbed through the operation of those eternal laws of retribution and progress discerned by our prophet. While there is no Messianic reference in a narrow sense, in the truest and deepest sense the whole foundation of the thought of the prophecy is Messianic. The question at stake in the world's drama presented on its stage is the future of the kingdom of God upon earth, and the denouement is that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (ii. 14). The theological and religious value of the piece is very great. Light is thrown on the methods of prophetic revelation (ii. 1, 2); the ultimate laws of political and social evolution (ii. 4—20); the moral and religious aspect of secular affairs (i. 12). Indeed the book is full of large conceptions of history, fine philosophical reasoning, subtle ethical analysis, and a superb faith in God and righteousness.

Subject to the limitations of his place in human progress and the development of revelation, this prophet may claim to be the apostle of the great ultimate fact of faith, and of its sovereign part in the evolution of human destiny (ii. 4). This key-note, alike of his prophecy and of his personal experience, has been taken up and expanded in the well-known New Testament adaptation, reached its full rights at the Reformation, and in the creeds and life of evangelical Christendom will doubtless continue to be illustrated in ever wider issues on to the world's end.

ZEPHANIAH.

1. *Authorship.*—The name of Zephaniah has a special aptness in relation to his message and office, but the appellation is by no means peculiar to the prophet. It occurs of several other personages in the Old Testament (2 Kings xxv. 18; Jer. xxi. 1, &c.; Zech. vi. 10; 1 Chron. vi. 36). In the Septuagint it appears as Sophonias. The word is a compound of the Divine name, and a root meaning *to hide*, and particularly with the effect of sheltering or preserving the object hidden. It is not unreasonable to suspect a reference to the suggestion of his name in the prophet's use of the phrase, "Ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (ii. 3). Jerome suggests an alternative interpretation, resting on another root, which throws into relief the prophet's function as a watchman or searcher into the purposes of Providence. The previous explanation is the more probable.

Of the man we know little beyond his date and his pedigree, of which the latter is given at considerable length in the superscription of his book. This is unusual. In the case of Zechariah the title goes back to the grandfather, but the lineage of Zephaniah is traced to the fourth ancestor. He is the "son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah" (i. 1). The reason of this exceptional fulness can hardly be to distinguish him from a contemporary priest Zephaniah, frequently mentioned by Jeremiah. It is more likely that the prophet's lineage was a distinguished one, and that the recital proceeds as far as and stops in Hezekiah, because of the crowning lustre of this ancestor. The interval is short, but not too short to allow of the ancestor in question being King Hezekiah, and it is natural to find in this the motive of the lengthy pedigree. But the name was probably not uncommon. So far as we know the king had no sons save Manasseh. And surely in this list he would be described as "king" or "king of Judah," for the fact of the designation following another name in close proximity does not account for its absence, since a Hebrew writer would not consider the repetition a literary blemish.

The point is not one for dogmatic assertion, and we must remain in unwilling uncertainty whether in Zephaniah we have or have not a prophet of the blood royal and of the seed of David. Tradition represents him as of Mount Sarabatha, of the tribe of Simeon, and his grave is assigned to Geba in Lebanon. An apocryphal book circulated in the early Church under his name. Unfortunately neither the historical books of the Old Testament nor his own prophecy furnish any biographical details. All we can assume from his writing with moral certainty is that he prophesied, wrote, and published his book in Jerusalem.

2. *Date.*—The title, which is singularly full and reliable, places the prophet's activity "in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah" (i. 1). The reign of Josiah was a long one, extending from B.C. 640 to 608. There is nothing in the book to justify the faintest suspicion that it does not belong to this period. Neither is there, unhappily, anything that enables us with certainty to define the particular portion of these thirty years that witnessed the publication of Zephaniah's prophecy. The conception of the oracle carries with it a certain universality that excludes concrete treatment and historical allusion. The great judgment threatening the world, which is the writer's theme, is indeed embodied in the imagery of war and conquest (i. 13, 16; ii. 12; iii. 15), but there is nowhere any delineation of the Divinely designated scourge, nor passing hint that might mark a definite personality. This striking vagueness means either that the prophet spoke in a moment of panic in the presence of a palpable menace of invasion, or that the plan of his oracle made him deliberately throw the earthly minister of vengeance into the background, that the picture might be filled with the presence of the Divine Judge Himself.

If the prophecy were prompted by an actually impending danger, it cannot have been Assyria or Egypt, since both are represented as sufferers. The instrument of retribution must have been the new Chaldean power, which was slowly but surely rising on the decay of Assyria during Josiah's reign, or else the terrifying irruption into Asia and Palestine of the Scythian hordes, which took place between B.C. 630—620, and is asserted to be the peril that lends a lurid colouring to the early prophecies of Jeremiah. In view of the studied indefiniteness of Zephaniah's drafting, there is no need to find the personal instigation to his prophecy in any single one of contemporary causes of anxiety and bodeful anticipation. The ultimate inspiration of his action lies deeper, and is not to be sought in the realm of sense, while the apocalyptic character of his message is not the

reflex of an age of panic, but is rather the proper outcome of the mental and moral idiosyncrasy of the messenger.

The prediction of the destruction of Nineveh (ii. 13—15) does not help us to a more definite date, for it is probable that the Assyrian capital did not fall in B.C. 625, but about the close of Josiah's reign. Perhaps the general manner of the reference suggests that the city was then not actually threatened, while the absence of rancour, in contrast with the warm denunciation of Moab and Ammon (ii. 8—10), breathes of the period, subsequent to the era of Nahum, when the cruel grip of Assyria on Palestine had become relaxed. There are many similarities of thought and expression between Zephaniah and the early prophecies of Jeremiah, who began his career in the thirteenth year of Josiah, but to determine the precise relation between them is an enterprise too precarious to inspire any confidence in the result. According to the historical books the reign of Josiah was marked by one great outstanding event. The reformation of religion, carried out by the king, divided his reign into two periods strongly contrasted. Such, however, is the complexion of Zephaniah's book, that we can discern no direct reference to this epoch-making movement, nor can we show that the prophecy bears in an unmistakable manner the characteristic colour of one or other of these two periods.

The one safe inference might seem to be, that the book was not produced in the excitement of the reformation (B.C. 622), but either considerably before or after. In other words, it belongs to the period of preparation, and is a threatening summons to amendment (ii. 1—3), or it pertains to the era of reaction, and is faith's refuge from despair in face of the manifest failure of all hope of adequate reform (iii. 1—10). This narrowing of the issue has not controlled critics, so that we have the book assigned to various points during the king's rule, *e.g.* the beginning of his reign, the commencement of the reform, soon after that event, and towards the close of his life. It is enough to notice the arguments only so far as they tend to place the work prior to or posterior to the reform.

3. *Description of the Period.*—In the foreground of the prophet's picture of his age, we are confronted with a luxuriant growth of idolatry, corrupt worship, indifference, violence, and injustice (i. 4—13; iii. 1—7), that seems to clash with the description in Kings of the purged and justly governed people after B.C. 622, and tallies with Jeremiah's pictures of unreformed Israel, when he began to prophesy. But both from Kings, Jeremiah, and the subsequent history, we know that these evils were never quite eradicated quickly sprang up again, and persisted on to

the fall of Jerusalem. That the corruption described is not that which existed previous to the beginning of the king's reforming campaign is thought to be indicated by Zephaniah's use of the expression, *I will cut off the remnant of Baal* (i. 4). The phrase, however, comparing it with the parallel idiom, *and the name of the Chemarim*, is more probably intended to express utter extermination, and therefore decides nothing.

Equally inconclusive is the contention that the reference to the priests doing violence to the law (iii. 4) must be explained by the discovery of the book of the law (2 Kings xxii.), and proves our prophecy subsequent to the reform. The mention of *the king's sons* among classes of the community on whom the judgment shall fall, if it necessarily means Josiah's children and involves public wrong on their part, would compel us to date the prophecy late, for in B.C. 622 the oldest was but twelve years of age, and could hardly even then be personally participant in national guilt. But conceivably the author's purpose is to point not to the victims' ill desert, but to the comprehensiveness of the judgment. Moreover, the reference is in all likelihood a general designation of all the princes of the blood royal (2 Kings xi. 2; 2 Chron. xxii. 11) attached to the court, or resident in Jerusalem. The point may afford a slight presumption in favour of the later date, but that is the utmost that can be said of it, and indeed of every other consideration that has been put foward.

In this absence of material evidence, we must be content with the larger era named in the title. Or the reader must decide for himself the narrower issue formulated above by the impression made on his mind as to the nature of the informing spirit and tone of the prophecy. If the prophecy sound to his ear like a stern trumpet call, meant to terrify the party of resistance and rouse the party of reform, he will locate it in the beginning of Josiah's reign. If it stir with the enthusiasm of a great movement in operation, if it reflect the likeness of a society corrupt but bettering, then he will date it during the reform. If it breathe despair of the nation and contemplate only the salvation of a remnant (ii. 3, 7, &c.), if it betray the disappointment of fondly cherished hopes (iii. 2, 7) and the abandonment of all faith in the present (iii. 8), then we shall recognise one of those prophetic voices (2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27) that in the evening of Josiah's reign proclaimed the inadequacy of his reform, or of any reform, to reverse the downward course of Israel's fortunes, and so sadly but trustfully turned their eyes to the future and to God.

4. *Genuineness.*—The genuineness of the book has scarcely been questioned, and the unity of the piece is generally admitted.

A few scholars propose to divide it into two or three oracles emitted at different times, but the composition is evidently an organic whole, put together on a single occasion, though of course it may sum up the teaching of a protracted ministry. Sharply severed divisions are not to be distinguished in the structure, but there seems to be a natural and progressive unfolding of the writer's thoughts. His theme is nothing less than the consummation of the world's history. He develops it in three stages. There is, first, the great judgment upon sin (chap. i.); second, the salvation of a faithful remnant amid the crash of nations (chap. ii.); third, the completion of judgment and restoration of God's kingdom upon earth (chap. iii.). The prophet perceives the imminent end of the present age of human sin and divine patience; final judgment is decreed, it falls with destructive force on all classes of religious offenders in Jerusalem (i. 2—7). Every form of sin in every quarter—luxury, violence, dishonesty, indifference—shall be reached, and receive inevitable retribution (i. 8—13). For near is the great day of judgment, terrible, resistless, not to be bought off, universal, and final (i. 14—18). Nevertheless repentance, sincere recourse to God, meekness, and righteousness are possible, and shall secure for the faithful a safe hiding-place in the coming judgment (ii. 1—3). Philistia desolated, depopulated, falls to the possession of the loyal remnant of God's people (ii. 4—7). Moab and Ammon, who rejoiced in Israel's calamity, shall be brought to ruin and inherited by the faithful, whose God they defied, but who now makes an end of all false gods, and conquers to Himself the worship of the world (ii. 8—11). In the distant west Ethiopia shall be devastated with the sword, and in the far east Nineveh the proud, the defiant mistress of the world, shall be reduced to utter desolation (ii. 12—15). Jerusalem, persistently disobedient, spite of Divine faithfulness and discipline, remains unashamed, obdurate, and impenitent (iii. 1—5). Judgments on other peoples, meant to warn her, proving futile, force on the advent of the final judgment, which in God's inscrutable mercy issues in the regeneration of the peoples and the restoration of Israel (iii. 6—10). Israel humbled, purged, sanctified, shall rejoice over her deliverance, God's presence in her midst, and her perpetual security (iii. 11—15). Happy and strong is this renewed Israel, with God joying in her love regained, completing her restoration, and fulfilling her destiny of world-wide goodness and glory (iii. 16—20).

5. *Style and Theme.*—The prophecy of Zephaniah is peculiar in style, matter, and spirit. Consequently the book has hardly received due appreciation at the hands of readers or commen-

tators. The composition is said to lack originality, and the writer is accused of leaning too much on his predecessors. The criticism is superficially correct, but the judgment is not sympathetic enough to bring out the truth. So far as the observation is justified by facts, it is due to this, that Zephaniah, in an abstract fashion, picks out and enforces just the two or three central dogmas of all prophecy, and so wakes echoes on every hand, not only with precursors, however, but equally with successors. Certainly his language exhibits a remarkable number of reminiscences of earlier writers, but probably an exaggerated estimate of the amount has gone abroad, and in some cases the drift of criticism tends to prove him not the copier but the model (*e.g.* i. 7, compared with Hab. ii. 10; Joel i. 15; Is. xxxiv. 6; Is. xiii. 3).

For the rest his style has not the lyrical elevation, the speaking imagery, the impassioned power of some of his colleagues, but he is a thinker of another mould, and his style has the qualities proper to his thought. He is systematic, massive, comprehensive; abstract and dogmatic in execution rather than concrete and historical; nevertheless clear and flowing in expression, forcible and weighty in statement, and full of a restrained but strong moral heat and religious ardour.

His theme appears to be judgment, but on closer inspection that is seen to be but a means to the real end and goal of the prophet's hopes, to wit, the creation of the kingdom of God among men. The judgment is, therefore, conceived not as an outburst of Divine anger, not as mere retribution on sin, but as a purging and remedial process destined to issue in redemption. Traces of Old Testament limitation of idea there are throughout, but the prophet's conception should win our admiration for its large-hearted comprehensiveness. As all nations are included in the judgment, so all peoples are embraced in the regeneration. If the heavenly kingdom has as its centre Zion and its kernel Israel, nevertheless its citizenship covers mankind, and its circumference is wide as the world. Preliminary fulfilments of the prophet's predictions history speedily furnished, but the vision he saw and the truths he taught will not be exhausted till God's government of men in its twofold aspect of judgment and of mercy be complete.

HAGGAI.

1. *Personal Traditions.*—The series of minor prophets is closed by a group of three post-Exilic writers, of whom the first in order and the earliest in actual date is Haggai. The appellation is peculiar to the prophet, though it is very closely akin to the names Haggi (Gen. xlvi. 16; Num. xxvi. 15) and Haggiah (1 Chron. vi. 30). It is derived from a root descriptive of excited or rapid movement, such as dancing, which came to be specially used of the celebration of religious festivals. If it is not an abbreviation, then this particular formation bears the meaning *festal*, and may have been attached to a child born on the anniversary of some great religious feast It is less likely to be connected with the cheering character of Haggai's message. A very probable suggestion, on the other hand, is that the name is a contraction of Hagariah (*Jehovah girdeth*), as the Hebrew of Zacchæus is of Zechariah. In the Book of Ezra Haggai is mentioned along with Zechariah, as the prophets who stirred the people to the rebuilding of the temple; and his name occurs in the Apocrypha under the form Aggeus.

The title of his book describes him simply as Haggai the prophet, without name of father, statement of birthplace, or any other detail. In this absence of information, founding probably on the phrase *the Lord's messenger* (i. 13, compared with Mal. iii. 1; ii. 7), devout imagination early suggested that Haggai and Malachi, together with John the Baptist, were not ordinary men, but angels in human form. Tradition, both Jewish and Christian, has much to tell of our prophet. According to the Talmud it was he who indicated the site of the former altar amid the temple ruins, who readjusted the orders of the priesthood, who gave permission for the law to be written in the Assyrian script, &c. Christian writers record that he was born in Babylon, went as a young man to Jerusalem, and was buried by the tombs of the priests.

It is vain to attempt to extract anything reliable from such

sources, and we are relegated to conjectures, more or less probable, based on the contents of his prophecy. From that we should conclude that he was certainly one of the exiles who returned under the decree of Cyrus; that he was possibly a priest, and probably a very old man, who had passed through the destruction of Jerusalem, survived the Exile, and played an important part in the Restoration. His advanced age is inferred, fancifully perhaps, from his literary style, but more forcibly from the personal turn given to his appeal to those who had seen the first Temple, from the very brief duration (four months) of his recorded activity, and from the fact that two years later his (younger?) contemporary Zechariah appears as chief of the prophets in Jerusalem.

On the ground of stylistic affinities, along with other circumstances, Haggai has been suggested as the author of some of the older portions of the Book of Ezra. In the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate his name, in association with that of Zechariah, is found in the superscriptions of certain psalms (notably the psalms numbered cxxxviii., cxlvi.—cxlix. in the English Psalter), but the ascription varies, and is wanting in some MSS., and probably means merely that in certain quarters these psalms were associated with the writings, or the devotional use of the writings, of these prophets.

2. *Date and Character of the Period.*—The recorded prophetic action of Haggai occurred in the second year (B.C. 520) of Darius, son of Hystaspes, who must be clearly distinguished from Darius Nothus, whose reign fell a whole century later. Some sixteen years before, the return from Exile had taken place (B.C. 536), and, according to the traditional interpretation of the difficult narrative found in the Book of Ezra, the foundation of the new temple was laid early in the following year. Little progress was made with the building ere the work had to be abandoned, owing to the intrigues of jealous neighbours at the imperial court. An altar had, indeed, been at once inaugurated and the routine of sacrificial worship established, but the temple edifice was left untouched during the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis. It is, indeed, even a question whether the ruins had been at this early period dealt with to such an extent as to permit of a formal foundation laying. There is much reason to suppose that this ceremony only took place in the second year of Darius (compare Hag. ii. 15, 18; Zech. iv. 9; viii. 9), and that the description in Ezra (iii. 8—13) really applies to this event.

In any case the position of things was profoundly dangerous and discreditable to the newly founded community at Jerusalem. The enthusiasm that had steeled the exiles to the sacrifices, and

stirred them to face the toils and hazards of the return, was the inspiring thought of rebuilding their holy and beautiful house on Mount Zion, and of once more finding in the restored Temple a centre of national life, and faith, and hope. The abandonment of the enterprise, under external opposition and personal disheartenment, meant practically the acknowledgment of political impotence and the renunciation of their patriotic and religious destiny. That the work was one of immense difficulty, that they were few in number and poor in resources, that discouraging and unforeseen obstacles supervened, these things were their misfortune, and not their fault. But that they supinely resigned themselves to defeat, that they too readily interpreted difficulties into insuperable barriers, or that, actually checkmated for the time, they too easily sat down under defeat, and turned to an exclusive and speedily all-engrossing concern for their own material prosperity, these symptons of spiritual decline and demoralisation were at once their disgrace and their warning.

No doubt there was much to excuse and account for this sudden collapse of zeal and recoil from lofty aspiration to faithless self-seeking. Like other enthusiasts, they had taken up their high calling with genuine devotion, but with many a fond illusion. They had invested their eager hopes in a difficult enterprise, and had prematurely promised themselves the harvest of rich returns, discounting a future that was much farther off than they dreamt of. The glowing imagery and poetic imagination of an Isaiah, guaranteeing the levelling of mountains and the filling up of valleys; beholding God himself bearing them on eagle's wings over every obstacle; picturing Jerusalem restored and the Temple rebuilt for forgiven Israel by the labour and largess of heathen peoples and their monarchs—these and similar outbursts of prophetic faith they had taken literally, and reckoned on victory without conflict, achievement without weary waiting, and the immediate realisation of the prophet's gorgeous visions of Zion's Messianic glory and triumph.

Instead, they found themselves, a small and despised colony, confronted with the heart-breaking task and stupendous toil of rebuilding ruins, reclaiming a soil spoiled by neglect, hindered and thwarted by petty enmities on every side, deceived by large imperial promises that were forgotten, or delayed by official indolence, or intercepted by the intrigues of rivals, with no prospects before them but a slow, desperate, and unaided hand-to-hand combat with untoward circumstances, adverse surroundings, and the depression of a mean and sordid existence. Human nature is but human. Reaction was inevitable. No wonder that enthusiasm gave way to despondency in face of such ob-

stacles, while spiritual life became crushed under the burden of grinding material toil, and so, partly of necessity and partly of demoralisation, the people having ceased to build the house of God, drifted slowly away from higher purposes, and threatened to sink to the level of the people of the land, satisfied to secure a physical subsistence, and forgetful of their Divine vocation and providential career.

3. *The Prophet's Message.*—At this critical point in the history of the restored community the prophet Haggai appeared on the scene, and to him, in concert with Zechariah (Ezra v. 1—2; vi. 14), belongs the credit of having recalled Israel to the path of duty and the ministry of revelation. The message of Haggai is directed to one definite purpose from beginning to end: to rouse the people to resume the erection of the sanctuary, to keep them steadfast to the work against every possible discouragement, and to inspire them with an animating faith in the inner grandeur of the material undertaking on which they were engaged. Whether he chose his time and course quite independently, or in consultation with Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, stimulated by the fact that under the new emperor circumstances favoured the attempt, are points that must stand on their own inherent probability.

The Book of Haggai consists of three prophetic appearances, falling respectively in the sixth, seventh, and ninth months of the second year of Darius. The prophet pillories the people's acquiescent procrastination of the duty of rearing and finishing the Temple, while they themselves (1 Chron. xvii. 1) dwell in well-panelled houses. He seizes on that very element in their condition which had been their chief excuse for delay, the poorness of the material progress already made, and turns it into a stimulus to energetic action. Boldly he declares that a blight and canker of dissatisfaction must rest on all they do, so long as the central element of moral and material prosperity is neglected, and with promises of happier days and more rewardful industry, he urges them to concentrate the whole energies and resources of the community on the restoration of the Temple (i. 1—11).

The appeal pierces the conscience and convinces the judgment of the little colony. The prophet assures them that in their new obedience to the Divine will they shall have the presence with them and the succour of Jehovah, and twenty-four days later operations are commenced on the Temple ruins (i. 12—15). Before a month had elapsed a moral danger menaced the undertaking. With natural retrospective partiality, with no ill intentions, but with the most disheartening effects on the workers, the old people, who remembered the splendour of the former

Temple (Ezra iii. 12—13), indulged in disparaging comparisons between its magnificence and the poverty of its successor, doubted whether the future could retrieve the vanished past, and questioned if Israel's forfeited birthright were not lost beyond recall. Energetically the prophet intervenes, protests against such faithlessness in the Divine presence and tenacity of purpose, declares that God's promises may linger on the way, but cannot lapse on account of man's unfaithfulness, and in view of Jehovah's power, the changes of providence, and the certainty of Heaven's resolves, predicts, with ringing certainty of assurance, that the future glory of the Temple shall outshine all the wonders of the past in the peace and perfect fruition of God's accomplished purposes (ii. 1—9).

Two months later a fresh intervention took place. Apparently doubts were expressed in some quarters, if the completion of the Temple would bring the desired and promised prosperity, which the erection of the altar and performance of religious rites had failed to secure. Haggai, by an illustration derived from the rules of ceremonial holiness and defilement, shows the people that all their previous endeavours were contaminated and robbed of blessing by the guilt of their neglect of their central and supreme obligation, and, assuring them that the impotence of partial surrender to God's will must not be made the measure of the possibilities of complete consecration, promises them the progress and well-being that had been hitherto lacking (ii. 10—19). Then, turning to the head and representative of the small and unassuming theocracy, which yet held within it the promise and potency of Heaven's best gift to men, the prophet foretells the downfall and overthrow of all worldly powers and authorities, and through the Divine favour, fidelity, and unchanging purpose of redemption, predicts the ultimate supremacy of God's chosen servant and minister on earth (ii. 20—23).

4. *Literary and Ethical Qualities.*—The language of Haggai is simple, sober, and pure. Two or three unwonted expressions belong rather to the writer's individuality than to his age. Compared with the picturesque imagery, glowing poetry, majestic conceptions, and impassioned oratory of an Isaiah, his style seems cold, threadbare, and poverty-stricken. But the comparison is hardly just, for the purposes and circumstances of the speakers are so diverse, and in all likelihood their personalities were equally contrasted. The aim of Haggai was immediate, matter-of-fact, and circumscribed. The circumstances of the people were reduced, their horizon narrowed, and the contents of their national existence simplified. But it would be a mistake to accuse our prophet of insignificance because of his composition,

or of superficiality because of the character of his mission. A prophet's historical magnitude is measured not by the literary splendour of his style, but by the importance of the work that he accomplishes.

It was an attenuated community and a contracted field on which Haggai had to operate; but none the less he saved his people from moral extinction and preserved in them the kingdom of God, just as much as any of his more heroic forerunners. His material goal was, indeed, the erection of a temple of stone and mortar; but who can read his words of ethical and spiritual anticipation (ii. 6—9, 20—23) without feeling that he valued the building only as the shrine of the knowledge, fellowship, and power of the living God of providence and history, and recognised in their neglect or performance of this external service Israel's abandonment of or allegiance to its high and holy vocation as the people of God upon earth?

He does, doubtless, exhibit marks of the limitations and tendencies of the new epoch of Israel's history with its more ecclesiastical development, its ceremonial and Levitical engrossment (ii. 11—14), its particularistic and not altogether lovely severance from the common sympathies and aspirations of humanity. While we have in the import attached to the Davidic personality of Zerubbabel a prolongation of the pre-Exilic hope, and in the vast pictures of the world's throes that usher in the Messianic times echoes of Isaiah's mighty dreams, we have, on the other hand, in the prominence of the Temple building the development of Ezekiel's priestly programme, and a preluding warning of the inevitable narrowing of Israel's national life in the future.

Yet it was precisely in this pathway that God's purpose was to work itself out, and His people achieve their redemptive mission to mankind. It was a mingled sowing of noble and of base, of good and of evil, and it had a mingled harvest. But, standing away back at the beginning of that strange process, beyond all question the aspirations that stirred the soul of Haggai, and the visions of glory and of peace that glow in his prophecies, were the seed, not of that sterile Judaism that rejected and refused their fulfilment, but the precursors and harbingers of the true glory of the second Temple—Jesus Christ and His kingdom of righteousness and peace.

ZECHARIAH.

1. *Account of the Prophet.*—The eleventh book of the minor prophets is assigned in the title (i. 1) to a prophet called "Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo," who began his career in the "eighth month of the second year of Darius." His early utterances deal with the rebuilding of the Temple, and we may therefore with absolute certainty identify him with the Zechariah mentioned in Ezra (v. 1; vi. 14), as the colleague of Haggai in spurring on the people to achieve this great and arduous enterprise. It is true that in Ezra Zechariah is called "the son of Iddo," but it is probable that this curt designation, linking him immediately with his grandfather (cf. Gen. xxix. 5; 2 Kings ix. 20), is due to the fact that Berechiah died prematurely, and so Zechariah succeeded directly to the rights and dignities of his grandfather.

This presumption is confirmed by the fact, that in the table of priestly succession in Nehemiah xii. (cf. vv. 4, 16) an Iddo who returned with Joshua from Babylon is followed by a Zechariah, who can hardly be other than the author of these prophecies. That being so, we must refuse to find in our prophet the Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah, of Isaiah's time (Isaiah viii. 2), or the martyr Zechariah, whom our Lord cites as slain between the temple and the altar (Mat. xxiii. 35). But we may reasonably infer that this prophet of the Restoration was of priestly birth, and comparatively a young man when he commenced his prophetic work The name is one of the most common in Hebrew history, and has been explained to mean *memory of Jehovah*, or *who remembers Jehovah*, but the analogy of similarly constructed names rather points to the signification *whom Jehovah remembers*. Of our prophet tradition has much to relate that is curious, but presents nothing quite reliable. There is a certain likelihood in the statements that he lived to a great age, and was buried near to Haggai in the priests' place of sepulture.

2. *Unity of the Book.*—The unity of the book, ascribed to Zechariah, has long been contested. More than two centuries ago the English scholar, Mede, raised the question in the interest

of reverence for Scripture. Remarking that in Matthew xxvii. 9, 10, a prediction is ascribed to Jeremiah that nowhere occurs in his writings, but is nearly akin to the purport of Zechariah xi. 12, 13, he argues that the inspired evangelist's citation outweighs in authority the mechanical arrangement of the Hebrew canon, which may well be, here as elsewhere, inexact in respect of authorship and chronology. He instances the loose order of the oracles contained in the Book of Jeremiah, the combination in other collections of utterances of various writers, the possibilities of mistake latent in the custom of engrossing on the same parchment roll diverse Scriptures according to considerations of space and convenience. Further, he urges the discord of character, contents, and aim between the earlier and undoubted utterances of the Zechariah of the Restoration, and the later chapters of our book.

While much importance cannot be attached to the motive of Mede's critical questionings, Christian scholarship has found in the grounds with which he confirmed them matter for serious consideration, and at the present moment one of the most perplexed and uncertain problems of Old Testament study is the connection and origin of the various parts of the Book of Zechariah. The first division (i.—viii.) is universally ascribed to Zechariah, the colleague of Haggai, and dated B.C. 520—518. The second division (ix.—xiv.) is usually separated into two distinct sections (ix.—xi. and xii.—xiv.), and is assigned to one or two prophets prior to the Exile, or to one or more writers of a much later date than the restoration. There are, however, not wanting scholars who maintain the single, undivided authorship of Zechariah.

3. *Summary of the First Division.*—The first eight chapters form a collection of utterances, complete and circumscribed, directed throughout to promote the erection of the Temple. The circumstances of the period have been fully described in the pages dealing with the Book of Haggai. The work had been paralysed by actual difficulties, but still more by supineness of spirit and despond. What the people needed was the inspiration of a soaring faith and the heartening of buoyant hope. This is precisely the spirit that animates the addresses of Zechariah—a spirit, we may be sure, attained by himself not without struggle, if we have regard to the mingled elements of doubt and reassurance, of questioning and enlightenment, that made his messages so helpful to his hearers, and render them still so biographically interesting to us.

The oracles consist of three groups all minutely dated: (1) chap. i. 1—6, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius,

consisting of an admonitory prelude; (2) chaps. i. 7; vi. 15, in the four-and-twentieth day of the eleventh month of the same year, consisting of a seven-fold vision, with its termination (vi. 1—8), and an appendix (vi. 9—15); (3) chaps. vii. 1—viii. 23, in the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius, consisting of a judgment concerning fast days and feasts. Zechariah's prophetic action is a warning appeal to the people's melancholy past. Bygone calamity should not create despond but inspire wisdom. The prophets of old and their admonitions were unheeded. Preachers and hearers are dead and gone, but the Divine judgments foretold have come terribly true. All that is human passes away, but the will of God prevails and abides. That alone must be done (i. 1—6). But where is the promise of a glorious restoration of God's kingdom in Judea? The land lies desolate, and the great world to all appearance is inert.

In a vision the prophet sees the heavenly couriers, that ride through the world, and realises the watchful interest in men's affairs of Divine providence. Beneath the seeming neglect and inactivity there are present and working an impassioned zeal of God for His People, slow but sure resentment of the heathen's excesses, and Israel's imminent restitution to power and prosperity in the exercise of His Divine vocation (i. 7—17). Is this possible in a world where Israel's foes are so formidable, and God's people so ruined and reduced? The horns that scattered Israel may tower aloft stupendous enough and menacing, but the secret resistless forces of Jehovah's righteous rule of the world are filing their roots through, and they must suddenly topple down in impotence (i. 18—21). The Jerusalem of to-day, slowly and insignificantly emerging from its ruins, may seem small and stripped of great possibilities in the future. Nevertheless God's city shall so expand that no walls can contain it, nor for its defence shall it require earthly ramparts, secure in God's keeping as within a wall of fire. Therefore let God's people quit their homes of exile amid the doomed heathen, and hasten to Zion, sacred as the chosen dwelling-place of God, and the cradle of the world's destiny (ii. 1—13).

But can a lost vocation be resumed, and bygone guilt atoned? Does not the sordid present prove that the past is irretrievable, and Israel's election gone beyond recall? The high priest, clad in stained garments, stands before Heaven's judgment throne, accused by Satan, but the Divine judge himself rebukes the adversary, vindicates his claim of access to God, invests him anew in priestly robes of acceptance, pronounces the saved remnant of Israel the object of God's love and high election, and

declares that the unseeming present already holds within it the germ and promise of the Messianic kingdom (iii. 1—10). To sight it is not easy to discern in the feeble instruments of the present the implements capable of such achievement. It needs faith to recognise their potency in the inspiration of them by God with His might and spirit. The golden candlestick, emblem of Israel's hope and life, might well burn out impoverished, but not if in deed and truth its flame be fed by ever-renewed oil of two living olive-trees, emblem of Israel's civil and religious heads rooted in the infinite and perennial resources of Divine omnipotence. With such supernatural succour human frailty may accomplish the building of the Temple, and all things besides (iv. 1—14). Divine support demands on man's side moral co-operation. To be Jehovah's instrument in realising His kingdom Israel must be purged clean from the evils that canker and corrode, paralyse and destroy a people's material and spiritual potency.

This national purification is imaged in a flying roll, charged with destructive retribution upon all dishonesty and untruth (v. 1—4). With this outward cleansing, the evil spirit, that was old Israel's ruin, shall depart clean away, and be replaced by God's own spirit of righteousness and truth. This transformation is pictured in the vision of the woman, borne away to the land of uncleanness in a leaden-lidded ephah, carried by two women with the wind in their wings (v. 5—11). All enigmas are now solved, all questions answered, the future and its process stand forth clear and certain. The vision has reached its end. The Divine emissaries ride forth to the four quarters of the earth, charged to execute everywhere the good and holy will of God, who quietly awaits the result (vi. 1—8). To this sevenfold vision of hope the prophet attached an action of bold encouragement. From some gold, contributed by exiles in Babylon, he had a crown or crowns made, and crowning the high priest (or the prince, or both—there is uncertainty about the narrative), promised the speedy completion of the Temple, and the advent of the expected Messianic reign of peace and glory (vi. 9—15).

The third section of these opening chapters presents an animated discourse of encouragement, springing from a question whether the fasts of the Exile should not at once be changed into feasts. Fasting and feasting, says the prophet, are nothing in themselves. They did not cause nor avert your fathers' fall. What God asked was the doing of justice and mercy. They disobeyed and perished. Your duty now is not to indulge in sadness or despair, but to cherish bright confidence in God's zeal and power; to put forth your best energies in your work, relying on

the promised prosperity; and above all to practise truth and righteousness. So shall God give you a future of unapproachable splendour, in which Israel shall be the centre of the world's aspiration and faith, because in Israel God lives and moves and rules (vii. 1—viii. 23).

4. *Style.*—The language of these prophecies is remarkably pure Hebrew, containing few, if any, traces of Aramaic influences. The style is mostly plain and prosaic, as befits description; but there are impassioned passages, where the speaker is moved in ethical appeals or in the delineation of Messianic glories. The form of his utterances, in respect of vision, interpretation, &c., is allied to the methods of Ezekiel and Daniel, though similar phenomena are present in earlier prophets, viz., in Amos, &c. Some of the features, such as the Divine couriers, angels, the female personification of Wickedness, the accusing Satan, &c., remind us of characteristic ideas of the Books of Job and Proverbs.

On the surface the prophet's conceptions and personal feelings might be accused of Jewish particularism and Levitical contrastedness of interest. When we allow for circumstances, the necessity of telling on immediate hearers, and when we search the seer's hopes and aspirations to their depths, we shall not refuse to see in his mood and theology the elements of limitation, that lent themselves to later Judaism; but we shall much more wonder at Zechariah's miracle of faith and invincible loyalty to the promise, and recognise in him a strong and indispensable combatant for the triumph of righteousness and of God upon earth.

5. *Summary of the Second Division.*—The second portion of the Book of Zechariah is clearly divided into two main sections, each introduced by the phrase, *The burden of the Word of the Lord*, which also stands at the head of the following prophecy of Malachi. The first section consists of three pieces, which may roughly be divided as in the chapters of our Authorised Version.

Divine retribution is approaching from the north. The Syrian peoples are overthrown; the Phœnician cities subdued; the Philistine states depopulated, repeopled by a mixed race, and made vassals to Judah; while God's people shall remain unharmed, encompassed by God's care. Zion's long looked for king comes, powerful to save, lowly of heart, resistlessly imposing peace on the peoples. Israel's bondage is over: his prisoners shall return; his warriors—Judah and Ephraim combined—vanquish the sons of Greece, irresistible in might Divine; and the land is crowned with prosperity and joy (ix. 1—17).

From God alone must Israel's well-being be sought, and not

from false guides and hurtful leaders, against whom God's anger burns. Jehovah Himself will fight for Israel, restore the houses of Judah and Joseph, overthrow the power of Assyria and Egypt, recall the exiles and re-erect the theocratic kingdom (x. 1—12). Invasion from the north is rolling onward, and falls with destruction on the chosen land. For God's people have been wayward and rebellious. He would have delivered them from heartless shepherds and tended them Himself, securing for them favour with the nations and unity among themselves (*i.e.* between Ephraim and Judah). These shepherds were cut off in one month; but they wearied Jehovah, and He broke the rod of *favour* that shielded them from external hostility. Finally rejected as their shepherd, He next broke the brotherhood between Ephraim and Judah, and delivered them over to the cruelty of a worthless shepherd, to their undoing and that ultimately of the shepherd (xi. 1—17).

The connection of this piece with the two foregoing discourses is hard to make out, if we are to take it as the sequel. One can hardly help asking, if it is not rather a mournful retrospect of Israel's history up to the Exile, showing the people's wilful guilt and Jehovah's unwilling but necessary rejection of them. It is also a question whether originally the passage (xiii. 7—9) did not conclude this delineation, though where it now stands its presence is justified and, indeed, essential.

The second section falls into two discourses, and differs from the previous passages in taking no more note of Ephraim, which is perhaps predominant over Judah in the former. God, who is Lord of human destiny, has set Jerusalem to be the world's centre, and the test of the fortunes of all other peoples. All nations, combined in attack upon it, are smitten by God with blindness, and the city is delivered. The deliverance commences in the country districts of Judæa, and the whole people are inspired with preternatural prowess (xii. 1—8). A spirit of contrition seizes on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they bewail *him whom they pierced* with a universal grief like the national mourning for Josiah slain in the battle of Megiddo (xii. 9—14). A fountain of cleansing shall be opened in the land, and the people shall purge themselves of all sins, especially of idolatry and false prophecy (xiii. 1—6).

Again disaster looms out in the opening of a last great oracle. By God's ordering Israel's shepherd is slain and the flock are scattered, one-third only surviving, but refined and purified they are restored to Divine favour and their high vocation (xiii. 7—9). Jerusalem, assailed by all nations, is already taken, pillaged, and half the people led away captive. Suddenly Jehovah inter-

venes, cleaves Mount Olivet in two, and saves His people in the clett, and so "at evening time there shall be light" (xiv. 1—8). From Jerusalem living waters flow out to the world; God reigns there, the land is transfigured, and densely and happily repeopled (xiv. 9—11). The heathen foes of Jerusalem are destroyed by plagues, disunion, and internecine war, and their wealth transferred to God's people (xiv. 12—15). The surviving heathen go up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles and worship Jehovah, recalcitrants being destroyed by plague and drought, while in Jerusalem holiness pervades even the most common things of daily life, and henceforth nothing intrudes alien, unclean, or hurtful (xiv. 16—21).

6. *Theories of Commentators.*—A perusal of this analysis, much more a careful study of the book, will suffice to show how remarkable a contrast there is between the first eight chapters and the concluding six. In the former we are surrounded by the sights and sounds of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and at every step we know where we are; but as soon as we leave them, where are we? We seem to pass at one step from solid earth and transparent sunlight into an obscure labyrinth or a country in the clouds, where all things are shadowy, confused, and intermingled. So vague and perplexed is the interpretation of these oracles, that the best commentators are hopelessly divided in their allocation, distributing them respectively over a period of five or six hundred years.

The most probable theories may be reduced to three. First, it is maintained that the second half of the book contains prophecies penned by the Zechariah of the first half, but after a very long interval, in old age, and altered circumstances. Secondly, the latter half of the book is broken into two portions, of which chaps. ix.—xi. (usually with xiii. 7—9 added) are the work of a pre-Exilic prophet about the time of King Ahaz (B.C. 735), possibly the Zechariah Ben Jeberechiah mentioned in Isaiah viii. 2, while chaps. xii.—xiv. (*minus* xiii. 7—9) are the production of a prophet in the time of Jeremiah (B.C. 606), possibly the Urijah referred to in Jeremiah xxvi. 20. Thirdly, the six chapters, as a whole or possibly in separate sections, are assigned to a much later period than the age of Zechariah, varying from the beginning of the third to the middle of the second century before Christ.

An immense range of considerations is involved in the discussion of the problem, and some of the most valuable evidence is of a very subtle literary description. It is impossible here to do more than indicate some of the palpable and most solid arguments that go to determine the issue. We shall refer to the

three divisions, *i.e.* chaps i.—viii., ix.—xi., xii.—xiv. as Parts I., II., and III. for the sake of brevity and convenience.

7. *Literary and Historical Evidence.*—The language of the several sections of the Book of Zechariah has been subjected to careful scrutiny and minute analysis with very conflicting results. Evidence of divergent vocabulary has been neutralised by alleging the reasonableness of diversity in view of the changes of theme, and is confronted by proof of community in the use of certain characteristic expressions and idioms, but nothing significant has been by either side established. The difference of style between the prosaic periods of Part I., and the oratorical and imaginative flights of Parts II. and III.; the absence in these of the visions, interpreting angel and allied imagery of the early chapters; the lack of definite and dated headings in the later portion, and the failure to ascribe the utterances to Zechariah or any other; the striking change of scene and theme; the vast and dim and distant vistas that replace the earlier near view and circumscribed horizon; these and a host of other contrasts are real and significant, but do not in themselves establish separate authorship, though they go to prove lapse of time in production, and a decisive transformation of situation, mood and aim.

When we proceed to search for definite historical allusions, or disclosures of actual background, that might positively fix the origin of these six chapters, we encounter a remarkable conflict of probabilities. In chap. ix. disaster descends on Syria, Hamath, and the cities of Phœnicia and Philistia, while Israel is preserved; and in chaps. x. Assyria and Egypt are presented as the powers that on either side have injured and still threaten Ephraim and Judah. Moreover, these two exist as co-ordinate and warlike states, while apparently in chap. x. there is reference made to the anarchy of the last years of Ephraim. All this, it is urged, points conclusively to the period of Hosea and the early years of Isaiah. But against this construction there is much to be said. Apparently from ix. 13, at the time of this prophecy, Israel's worst enemies and oppressors are the Greeks, which could hardly be put forward prior to the Exile.

It may be said, that what is meant here, as in Joel iii., is simply that at an early period Hebrew slaves had been sold to the Ionians; but surely the manner of the reference implies that Greece was then Israel's worst enemy, which points to the opening of the fifth or the end of the fourth century. If the discourse is purely a general forecast, the former might well be the period, and into that age Zechariah may easily have survived and prophesied. If on the contrary a particular occurrence shapes this ninth chapter, unquestionably what fits it best is Alexander's

victorious march, when after the battle of Issus (B.C. 333) he swooped down on Syria, captured Tyre after a short siege, received the submission of the Palestinian towns, and put the inhabitants of Gaza to the edge of the sword.

In post-Exilic times the Jews had much to endure from the inhabitants of the countries and cities named in ix. 1—8 (cf. 1 Mac. v.; Sir. i. 26, &c.), and the statement of ix. 6 reminds us irresistibly of the unintelligibility of the language of Ashdod in Nehemiah's time (Neh. xiii. 24), due probably to intermixture of the old race with Arab immigrants (Neh. iv. 7). During this period, if we understand by Assyria, either Persia (cf. Ezra vi. 22) or the Seleucid Kingdom in its rivalry of the Ptolemies, Judæa had constant cause for uneasiness, and was involved in actual suffering through the restless relations of Egypt to the opposing power on the other side of Palestine. Again, it seems more in conformity with the language both of chaps. ix. and xi. to consider Ephraim and Judah not as co-ordinate states, but as actually united, and as the period prior to the original schism is impossible, we should have recourse to the post-Exilic period, when the restored community was held to be the representative in idea and in fact of all Israel, or to a still later time, when the Hebrew community in Galilee or the Diaspora was described under the old name of Ephraim.

During this era there was also plenty of occasion to picture Israel as the prey of rapacious and worthless shepherds (xi.), while the degree of the dispersion suggested by such passages as ix. 11—13, x. 6, 11, can hardly be referred to the Assyrian devastation of Gilead and Lebanon, but drives us powerfully to think of times subsequent to the Exile (compare ix. 12, with Isaiah xl. 2, xlii. 7).

Coming now to Part III., we are struck by the absence of any further reference to Ephraim, the exclusive interest of the writer in Jerusalem, and the remarkable alteration of atmosphere and prospect. This diversity is enough to suggest difference in the time of composition, but hardly distinction of authorship and epoch, at least unless both parts are pre-Exilic. In chap. xii. the presentment of Jerusalem's danger has a decidedly post-Exilic character, while if the allusion to deliverance originating in the country be occasioned by any definite event, we should find the motive in the story of the Maccabees. If it be urged that the event contemplated is the Chaldean disaster, then it is difficult to combine the tenor of the prophecy with the teaching of Jeremiah, or its details with the actual circumstances and facts. It is vain to urge that Josiah's death is still recent, on account of the reference in xii. 11, in face of the parallel allusion to the

earthquake of King Uzziah in xiv. 5. The manner in which the house of David is introduced (xii. 12) and the absence of any mention of a king favour the post-Exilic theory, while the citation of idolatrous practices and false prophecy as prevalent sins does not exclude the later dates, when we consider the reason of Nehemiah's stern resistance of mixed marriages, and the statements of post-Exilic literature, both sacred and secular (Neh. xiii. 26; Mal. iii. 5; Joseph. Antiq. viii. 2—5, &c.). The special reference to Egypt of xiv. 18, 19, while it peculiarly suits the period of Josiah and Jehoiakim, is too undefined and too natural at any time to serve in fixing the date, and the same may be said of the suggested allusion to Manasseh's persecutions (xii. 10), and other proposed combinations.

A very valuable line of investigation has been led, but awaits further and more exact prosecution, in the shape of determining relationship between the language and ideas of these chapters and the various books of the Old Testament prophetic literature. It is impossible to enter into the details of the process, but, while much may still be doubtful, it seems fair to say that a number of points of contact exist between these six chapters and the prophets of the Exile, and that it is hardly possible to believe that these have borrowed from Zechariah ix.—xiv. Moreover, while much of the wording of the prophecies in question recalls earlier times, it can hardly be denied that the general atmosphere is priestly, apocalyptic, post-Exilic. Much of the imagery leads to the same conclusion, and the Messianic conceptions and expectations belong to the later prophetical developments.

If these impressions be well-founded—and the flow of critical opinion is setting in the direction of the theory of post-Exilic origin—then we must account for those features of language and allusion, which suggest an early date, in one or other of two ways. Either the author, as has been suggested of Obadiah, took up ancient oracles, that lent themselves to his purpose, and especially in chaps. ix.—xi. adapted them to express the fears and hopes and faults of his own day. Or else, in conformity with a literary affectation or custom of his age, or from personal reverence for what was old and venerable, he deliberately clothed his messages to his own age in an archaic dress, and framed them in a more or less allegorical form.

Both suppositions are easily possible, and might be supported by many similar phenomena. But it is probable that it will for many a day remain an open question, whether Zechariah wrote the entire book, the first part in youth, the second in old age; or whether the oracles of two earlier seers, existing in manuscript without note of authorship, came in later times to be appended

to the genuine work of Zechariah; or whether the production of a prophet in the time of the Ptolemies was first combined with the work of Malachi, receiving similar headings, the whole subsequently placed in the canon after the original Zechariah, till in course of time these chapters came to be taken as part of Zechariah's own prophecies. Between these last suppositions there is little to choose, for in the one case how came a work of the eighth century to be tagged on to Zechariah, and in the other how came a second or third century piece to find its way in among the prophets instead of going to the Hagiographa?

Whatever the origin of these prophecies, all will unite in admiration of their majestic, if sometimes weird and sombre grandeur. They are couched in a style of much power and imaginative beauty. The religious conceptions, marked as they are by inevitable imperfections, are in their essential contents profound and creative. How great has been their influence can only be measured by those who are acquainted with Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings. The part they play in the Messianic delineations of the New Testament needs not to be recounted. In each and all of its elements and influence the Book of Zechariah has amply vindicated its right to a place in the history of the Old Dispensation, and beyond the measure of many other prophecies has prepared and heralded the advent of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom.

MALACHI.

1. *Authorship.*—The canon of the minor prophets is closed by the Book of Malachi, who has therefore been called by the Jews "the seal of the prophets." Of the author we know absolutely nothing. It is even doubtful if we are in possession of his real name. The word Malachi, if it is not an abbreviation, means either *angelic*, or *my angel*, or *messenger*. More probably it is a contraction for Malachijah, as Abi (2 Kings xviii. 2) is for Abijah (2 Chron. xxix. 1), and signifies *messenger* or *angel of Jehovah*. In any case the meaning of the name is remarkable. The name itself is not borne by any other person in the Old Testament, nor is our prophet mentioned in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, though they contain such elaborate lists of the families and personages of the period. The word (*Malachi* = *my messenger*) occurs in a characteristic passage of the book (iii. 1).

The title (i. 1), which gives no patronymic, or birthplace, or detail of any description, is curiously similar to the headings of the closing sections of Zechariah (ix. 1; xii. 1). Consequently the idea early arose that the word is not the writer's proper name, but either a *nom de guerre* employed by himself, or a convenient title of reference attached to the book by some scribe or editor, suggested by the most picturesque and outstanding phrase of the prophecy. The Septuagint prefixes to the prophecy the heading *Malachias*, but translates the title, *The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of His messenger or angel.* The Targum inserts the note, *Malachi, whose name is Ezra the scribe.*

The idea of a *nom de guerre*, though rejected by a majority of writers, found favour with not a few Jewish Rabbis and early Christian authors, while some eminent modern scholars argue strongly for the ascription of the book to Ezra. Unquestionably the facts already cited create a considerable degree of uncertainty about the name. But that Ezra should have been the author, in face of the absence of his name and differences of style, is hard

to believe, while the notion of anonymity has against it the general custom and essential character of the prophetic function, and in addition the peculiar difficulty, not to say impossibility, of concealment in the circumstances of the restored Jewish community.

2. *Date.*—The period of Malachi's activity may be determined with approximate exactness. As in the case of Haggai and Zechariah, we find ourselves among the Jews of the Restoration, but at a much later point in their history. The question of the prophetic urgency is no more the rebuilding of the sanctuary. The Temple exists, and the routine of sacrifice has been long in operation. Unlike the desolations of Edom, the ruins of Jerusalem have been repaired. The Jewish colony is established on a firm footing, but the enthusiasm of a restoration, that has proved only partial, has given way to disappointment and doubt. In the depression of weary delay, faith has sunk into scepticism, and religious indifference has engendered various disorders; in particular, a scandalous degradation of divine worship, grave irregularities in the priesthood and perversions of their office, widespread social oppression and injustice, and especially a dangerous readiness to intermarry with heathen neighbours.

The picture corresponds minutely with the delineations in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and therefore points unmistakably to a period commencing about half a century after the Restoration, and terminating with the second administration of Nehemiah (say B.C. 475—425). The book has been dated earlier and also later, but practically the question narrows itself to a choice between the time of Ezra's first reforming activity (B.C. 458) and the final intervention of his successor and coadjutor, Nehemiah (B.C. 425). So far as the abuses dealt with by the prophet are concerned, they were probably as prevalent on Ezra's arrival as on the occasion of Nehemiah's second visit. We know that it was so with regard to the laxity of marriage (Ezra ix., x.), and who can doubt that the kindred corruptions existed likewise? Still there is not that minute detail of correspondence which we find between the prophecy and the narrative of Nehemiah's reformation (Neh. xiii.)

Moreover, had Malachi worked so early, the fact could hardly but have been chronicled in the history, while if he laboured at the later date, the failure to mention him is not inexplicable in a record of such brevity. If the reference to the ruins unrepaired of Edom (i. 3) implies the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, that would fix us to a point subsequent to Nehemiah's first governorship (B.C. 433). If it be the case that prior to this time the

material for the Temple service was a charge on the imperial purse (Ezra vi. 9 ; vii. 20—23), a similar inference would follows since Malachi holds the people responsible, and we know that Nehemiah publicly pledged them to provide what was necessary for the maintenance of religion (Neh. x. 32—39).

The prominence given to the law of Moses, and particularly to questions of worship, suggests a time subsequent to the promulgation of the Mosaic code by Ezra (Neh. viii.) and the solemn covenant imposed upon the nation, which especially emphasised observance of the law, purity of marriage, sanctity of the Sabbath, prescribed release of debtors, and the endowment of the Temple. It may, however, be urged that, with the doubtful exception of the allusion to the tithes (iii. 10), the chief references to the law (*e.g.* Horeb (iv. 4), statutes and judgments (iv. 4), covenant with Levi (ii. 4), &c., are distinctly Deuteronomic, and surely, had Malachi shortly followed the enactment of the great national covenant, he would have expressly appealed to it as an aggravation of the people's guilt, and used it as a goad to their consciences. A positive decision may be impossible, but the balance of opinion inclines decisively to the later date.

In that case we may think of Malachi as either the precursor of Nehemiah's reform, conducting an agitation prior to his return, or as his adjutant in actually effecting the reform. The allusion to the custom of going with presents to the governor has been held to exclude Nehemiah's actual administration, because he did not exact his official dues (Neh. v. 14). But a gift to ingratiate the giver is quite another thing, and, moreover, the reference is not personal or local, but general and purely illustrative. Apart, however, from this irrelevant point, every consideration combines to recommend as the period of Malachi's prophetic activity the years of religious relapse, of restiveness under burdens warmly taken up, of weariness of vows enthusiastically made and now meanly shirked, which followed the departure of Nehemiah and preceded his return.

If this be so, then the advent of the stern reformer in the unforeseen suddenness of his appearance, in his fiery zeal for God's house and service, in his merciless severity of reformation, in his embodiment of the spirit of an Elijah, and in his inexorable enforcement of the law of Moses, must have appeared an immediate, if only a partial, fulfilment of the threatenings and promises of Malachi.

3 *Character and Purpose.*—The book is not a collection of speeches uttered on different occasions. It forms one continuous composition, prepared for publication perhaps, rather than for

oral delivery. It is addressed to an age of overt, though unavowed, national discontent and disaffection. Theocratic scepticism, born of moral obtuseness, is the evil which Malachi confronts. The people look at their slow and humbling recovery, in place of the rapid and glorious progress prophecy had led them to anticipate, and they ask bitterly, "Is this God's peculiar love of His people?" The prophet's reply points them to the significant fact of Jehovah's persistent restoration of Israel to national existence, in contrast with the irretrievable downfall of their kinsmen the Edomites. That the reverses of fortune should be Edom's destruction, but Israel's discipline, is proof that Israel possesses a unique place and destiny in the Divine purposes (i. 1—5).

The answer is adequate, but requires to be supplemented by an explanation of what is painful and perplexing in the present situation of tardy recovery. This is done by pointing out that the delay in fulfilling Israel's destiny is due not to Divine slackness, but to Israel's unworthiness and disloyalty to the covenant. The indictment consists of two parts, of which the first seizes and scathes with burning scorn the degradation of Divine worship, the corruptions of the priesthood, and the social wrongs among the people (i. 6 ; ii. 16), while the second lays bare their roots in religious doubt of God's moral earnestness, the profitableness of His service, and His fidelity to fulfil the promises of the covenant (ii. 17 ; iv. 6).

The people are unwilling to admit their culpability, and it is necessary for the prophet to drive his charges home. Sons honour their fathers, servants their masters, but Israel has no reverence, not even bare respect for God. For His worship they select the sorriest beasts of their flocks and the shabbiest remnants of their possessions, such as they would never think of presenting to the civil ruler, and in this loveless insult priests and people are unblushingly combined. Better far to shut the Temple and to quench the altar's fire, for already in every land a worship ascends to Jehovah pure and warm and acceptable in His sight (i. 6—14).

The priests, chosen by God to be the fountain of law and justice and religion, promised therefore the Divine favour and the people's honour and support, have perverted their office, corrupted justice, alienated the laity from religion and morality, and have, therefore, in just recompense forfeited their power to bless, destroyed the dignity of their high vocation, and incurred universal obloquy and contempt (ii. 1—9).

The people, forgetful of the obligations of theocratic brotherhood, reckless of the risk to religion and the continuity of a holy

seed, have intermarried for sordid advantages with heathen neighbours, and aggravated their guilt by heartlessly putting away their Jewish wives, whose tears and plaints ascending to heaven in the Temple court hide from God's eyes the sacrifice offered on the altar, and call down on the transgressors His righteous vengeance to root them and their houses out of His land and people (ii. 10—16).

This moral degeneracy has its root in a deep-seated religious scepticism. The delay in the accomplishment of the covenant promises, conceived selfishly and superficially as Israel's material aggrandisement, has begotten doubt of God's moral earnestness. Does God judge on earth? Is He on the side of the good and against the wicked (Ps. lxxiii.)? The prophet meets the sneering misgiving with a stern declaration of the certainty of the judgment, an explanation of its delay because of Israel's unreadiness for it, and a description of God's speedy advent, in order that He may, first of all, purge unsparingly people and priesthood, and, secondly, execute relentless judgment on all persistent wickedness (ii. 17—iii. 6). Further, the depression in the material affairs of the nation has produced scepticism as to God's care for human homage, that is, in its material form, doubt of the profitableness of God's service. The prophet protests that it is precisely this half-heartedness of worship and dishonesty in giving God His dues, that is the cause of their continued misfortunes. He challenges the people to make experiment of a contrasted course of conduct, and see what a wealth of blessing it will bring (iii. 7—12).

Finally, the divine delay to right Israel among the comity of the nations has, on the one hand, set the ungodly sneering in unbelief, and on the other moved the devout to mutual conference and sad but trustful prayer and waiting. God is not blind as His silence might seem to suggest. He marks the loyalty of these, the defiance of those. Speedily He will speak out, and in the triumph of the just and the destruction of the unjust He will make for ever unmistakable the eternal distinction of goodness and of evil. In a final manifestation of Divine grace and judgment God will avenge all wrong and establish all righteousness. He will make an end of sin, and gloriously reward His own, and so completely fulfil His covenant promises. In anticipation of that day Israel's duty is a loyal return to the spirit of the ancient law and prophecy. For that end Elijah, the great prophet of fidelity and national decision, shall return. Thus prepared, Israel can face the coming judgment without fear, and welcome the consummation of the Divine covenant (iii. 13; iv. 6).

4. *Method and Structure.*—The method and style of Malachi are exceedingly characteristic. How far they are the product of his own individuality and how far the creation of his age, it is not easy to determine. Critics probably make too much of the latter influence, and too little of the former. The language is good, pure Hebrew, and, with the exception of one or two passages, easy to read and understand. The integrity of the entire book is admitted, though quite recently the genuineness of the last verse has been questioned. The prophet's style has power, fulness, fire, with a certain logical restraint and mechanical uniformity that disguise its intrinsic energy. Though some passages remind us of the dramatic oratory of the great prophets, the greater part is couched rather in the style of the legal pleader or moral reasoner. The structure has more of plan and detailed arrangement, more of argument and appeal to first principles, more, in short, of the scribe and the school. But it is possible that Malachi's sententious maxims, and citations of objections and captious questions, may represent the clash of actual public exhortation and discussion, and, in any case, in their warmth and point they are far removed from the cold dialectic and logic chopping of a closet moralist.

If the manner of Malachi bears traces of the approaching reign of the scribes, there is also a very perceptible breath of the coming winter of prophecy in his striking reversion to the thought of Moses and Elijah, in connection with the conception of a new spring-tide, that should be at the same time the fulfilment of the old. The presentiment found its verification in the silence of the voice of prophecy till the advent of Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist, and the prophetic intuition, its New Testament confirmation, in the spiritual significance of the story of the Transfiguration.

For the rest, it is false to accuse Malachi of harsh particularism and ceremonial shallowness. In the reference to Esau there is an appearance of harshness in the phraseology, but not in the prophet's positive conception, while there is a fine width and humaneness in his ideas of a world-wide service of Jehovah (i. 11), God's preference of mercy and justice over sacrifice and ceremony (ii. 13), and the ethical obligations of brotherhood created by the faith in a Divine Fatherhood (ii. 10).

If his thoughts and ideas move largely in the realm of Old Testament worship and material things, that is the penalty of his fidelity to his duty as a man of his own time and his own people. But if, as was right, his thoughts of God and his hopes for men begin on earth and are rooted in his own age, they

prove their heaven-born origin in this, that they do not end on earth or terminate in time, but grow on through the ages, and travel down through the generations, with a wealth of meaning that is inexhaustible, and a vitality that is eternal. The last word of the Old Testament has become the first of the New, and the faith of the prophet is finding its fulfilment in the fulness of Christ and of His kingdom.

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